

SEVENTEEN
SERMONS

PREACH'D UPON
Several Occasions.

K 227 b 19
By W. FLEETWOOD, D. D.
Now Lord Bishop of ELY.

First Collected together.



L O N D O N :

Printed for W. MEARS at the *Lamb*, J. BROWN
at the *Black Swan*, and F. CLAY at the *Bible*,
without *Temple-Bar*. MDCCXVII.

Price Five Shillings.

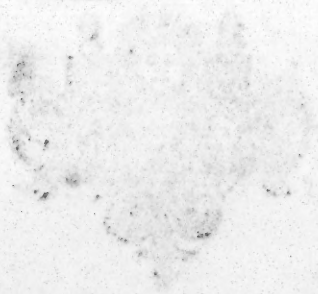
SEVENTEEN
SERMONS

PREACHED AT

St. Andrew's Church

By the Rev. Mr. W. H. W. W. W.

Author of the



Printed by W. H. W. W. W.



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Preach'd at *Guild-Hall Chapel*, *December 11, 1692.*

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what is Man the better?

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S E R M O N I.

PREACH'D AT
GUILD-HALL Chapel,
D E C E M B E R xi. 1692.

Before the Right Honourable the
LORD-MAYOR
A N D
Court of Aldermen.



1855

ST. R. M. O. N. T.

CHURCH

LORD MAYOR

Court of Admiralty

1855



ECCLES. VI. 11, 12.

Seeing there be many things that increase Vanity, what is Man the better ?

For who knoweth what is good for Man in this Life, all the Days of his vain Life which he spendeth as a Shadow ? for who can tell a Man what shall be after him, under the Sun ?



THE great End and Design of King Solomon in this Book, is, To shew wherein consists the true and lasting Happiness of Mankind ; which he in short comprises *in the fearing God, and keeping his Commandments.* But knowing the World was old, and had been long in full Possession of another sort of Notions and Conceits of Happiness than what he came to teach, he found it necessary, first to undeceive it of its Errors, correct its wide Mistakes, and root up its ill-founded Prejudices, and Prepossessions in this Matter. And to this end, the Preacher (as he calls himself) well knowing 'twas as hard a Task to unlearn an old Mistake, as to take up a Lesson of new Truth, spends half his Sermon in discovering to the World the

Emptiness and Vanity of those four great Ends in which the Generality of Mankind had concurr'd to place their chief Felicity, namely in *Wisdom, Pleasures, Honours*, or in *Riches*; on each of which he argues from particular Mischiefs and Dissatisfactions, and irresistibly concludes, That each of them was *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*.

He was the fittest Man to pass this decretory Sentence and decisive Judgment, that ever yet was born into this World, of humane Parents. For tho' there have been Princes of as dissolute a Soul, and as unbounded Luxury as *Solomon*; although there have been Princes that have rais'd their Slaves and Bondmen to Dignities and Wealth, that far surpass'd the Glory and the Riches of the Kings of *Israel* and of *Judah* both together; yet none of them were ever fitted equally with *Solomon*, to give a true Account and Character of either Pleasure, Wealth, or Honours, because they wanted Wisdom with the rest, and consequently neither understood the Use and Worth, nor yet the Vanity and Emptiness of those Enjoyments. When we see a Man over-run with Pleasures, or behave himself with Insolence in Honour, or employ his Wealth to evil Purposes, we presently conclude the Fault is in his Judgment, and that the things themselves, and in their own Natures, are such as Men of Wisdom and Understanding may both place and find therein abundance of true and solid Happiness. But *Solomon's* Experience and the Sentence that he passes on them, is sufficient (one would think) to silence all Suggestions of that Nature. He was the richest and most glorious King that ever rul'd in *Israel*, and made his Wealth and Power subservient to his Pleasures. And to all this the most consummate Knowledge that a humane Heart and Head is capable of bearing, was bestowed upon him; bestowed upon him at the first, and in an

an Instant too; not acquir'd by Art and Industry, nor labour'd out by long Experience; which kind of Wisdom is commonly bought with a great deal of Time, and a great many Miscarriages and sad Mistakes. And if a King, wise as the Oracles of God, and wise before he enter'd on his Wealth, and Power, and Pleasures (which never Man besides him was,) if *he* pronounce this Judgment, both from the perfect Knowledge and the full Enjoyment of them all, That *they are Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*; there is enough, without recurring to the Infallibility of Scriptures, to be certain of the Conclusion; for what he says elsewhere, is very applicable here; *What can the Man do that cometh after the King, but that which hath been already done?* The King hath tried and done all, and that with greater Assistances and more Advantages, than any Man besides hath done; and yet declares, That *all is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. And what can any Man do after him, but try the same, and make the same Conclusion too, if he be wise; or rather make the same Conclusion, without the Tryal, and be content to be wise at Solomon's Expence?

The Text is the Sum and Conclusion of all Vanities, the Epilogue of all these false Felicities. *Seeing there be many things that increase Vanity, what is Man the better?*

It may be some one might object, What tho' a Man do not find his Account in *Wisdom*; it may be, the pursuits of it are painful without Benefit, exceeding hard to get at all, and yet of very little use when gotten; and it may be that Conclusion is very true, *That in much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow*. Yet there are other things in which a Man may seek and find his Happiness in this Life, such as it may be, Pleasure, Honours, or Possessions; and that if One

should fail a Man, Another may be sure to make him good Amends for his Mistakes in Judgment, or his Labour lost in Practice. *Solomon* therefore (aware of this be sure) concludes them all, upon Experiment, under the same condemning Sentence; tells his Hearers, That certain Happiness was not to be found in any thing of this Life: That it was never the better for Men, that there were many things and different Objects in this World to place their Happiness upon, since all those many things and different Objects carried their many and their differing Vanities along with them; and multiplied Vexations to their Pursuers and Possessors. What is it better for a Man to have more Occasions to employ his Care and Industry upon, since he thereby has but the more Defeats? What is it better for a Man to have Diversity of Objects to fix his Hopes upon, and raise him more and greater Expectations, since he thereby has only more and greater Disappointments?

This Verse is capable of, and hath had other Meanings put upon it; but this seems both the best and properest, and connects it with what went before, and what follows.--- For, *who knoweth what is good for Man in this Life?* Though there be many things, never so many things, (which yet may be ranked under those four Heads) yet what is Man the better as to the attaining true Felicity in them, since they are all of them vain, and have no true Felicity belonging to them? But if they had, Man were as far from getting it as ever, since he is ignorant wherein it does consist, and what it is would make him happy in this Life. *Who knoweth what is good for Man in this Life?* The most exalted Understanding in the World, the clearest Foresight and the strongest Reason, with the most mature Judgment, is commonly as much mistaken in its Choice of what is good for Man in this Life, as he that commits it to the Chance

Chance of a Pair of Dice, or the Arbitration of some thoughtless Child : And that, because of the Uncertainty of future Events, which human Wisdom cannot possibly foresee ; and the Instability of things present, which human Power cannot possibly fix and fasten. And since it is not worth the Name of Happiness, that is expos'd to so much Chance, and of such short and uncertain Duration, it is impossible for Man to know and chuse what is good for him in this Life, and where to find his true Happiness ; *For who can tell a Man what shall be after him ?* Who is there knows what Time to come will bring forth ? whether to Morrow's Event will not spoil to Day's Happiness, and quite unravel the best knit Plots, and frustrate the most probable Designs that can be.

The Words in general thus explained, will afford us Three Propositions to consider :

I. That tho' there are many Things, and great Diversity of Objects for Men to busie themselves about, and seek their Happiness and Satisfaction in ; yet it is never the better for them, because they all increase Vanity, they are all of them vain, and 'tis in vain to think of finding our true Happiness in any, or in all of them.

II. That tho' these several Things would really much conduce to the bettering Men's Conditions, and procuring to them Happiness ; yet it were never the better for them, they would be never the nearer Happiness, because no Man knows what is truly good for him in this Life, and most convenient to the attaining of that End.

III. That tho' a Man should be so fortunate, as to light upon what was good for him at present, yet

8 *A Sermon Preach'd before*

he would have no great reason to exult, because his Good may be short-liv'd, and change its Nature in a little time ; *For who can tell what shall be after him ?*

Of these in their Order. And, *First*, That the Diversity and Multitude of Objects are all of them vain, they all increase Vanity. And this cannot better be demonstrated, than by considering in short the Vanity of those Four Heads, of *Wisdom, Pleasure, Riches, and Honours* ; to which the World in general is devoted, in which they think to find their Happiness, and to which all other Things are easily reduc'd. And,

I. Of Wisdom,; *I have gotten* (says Solomon, chap. 1. ver. 16.) *more Wisdom than all they who have been before me in Jerusalem ; yea, my Heart had greater Experience of Wisdom and Knowledge ; but, in the very next Verse he says,---- I perceive that this also was Vexation of Spirit ; for in much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increaseth Knowledge, increaseth Sorrow.* Not to speak much of the Difficulties of acquiring Wisdom here, and getting but a tolerable Share of Knowledge ; how many Years are spent in providing the Memory with Words and Images ; how many in applying Words to Things ; how many more in fitting them to understand Coherences, and making them attend to Consequences and Connections ? And when the Mind is thus prepared with necessary previous Elements, what work is there, to dispose it to see the Convenience and Necessity of its pursuing Wisdom ? How much of Life is over-slipt, before it thinks there is any need of farther Understanding, and before it can be brought to set about that Business in good earnest ? And when it is convinc'd and resolute, what Pains, what Trouble and Perplexities are there in laying down one single Prejudice and Prepossession ? What Labyrinths and Intricacies do we wander in, when we would solve

solve some new or old Effects of Nature? How deep and dark are her Recesses? How hidden and obscure are all her Causes and her Operations? How subtle and entangling are the Nets of Error? How hard is it to separate it from Truth; and how involv'd is Truth it self in Controversies and Disputes? What a World of staggering Probabilities on both Sides? And if a Man be settled with some fair Appearances, and specious Amusements to Day, he is, perhaps, awaken'd by some sharper and severer Truths To-Morrow; and the next Day's Thoughts put him again into a State of new Distraction and Irresolution. To name no more, How hard is it to fix on any Point, and to pursue it closely to the end? What infinite Labours, and almost insuperable Difficulties, does our inquisitive and curious Itch of new Varieties put us upon; so that we pass our Lives away in our Diversions and Excursions after collateral Things, and lose the very Sight and Scent of our main Purpose and Design? Not to dwell, I say, long on these, and on a Thousand, and Ten Thousand other Difficulties that attend the Acquisition of Wisdom, and the getting a little more than ordinary Understanding. Not to enlarge too far upon the Troubles of possessing Wisdom; its most insatiable and voracious Appetite; its never being fill'd with any Addition to it. Thirst after Knowledge, is like that of Riches, and increases with it. It is (as one hath well express'd it) like Drink to a Man in a Fever, which inflames the Appetite to a more imperuous craving; which is a very painful and uneasy State, and shews the Vanity and unsatisfying Emptiness of Knowledge, and brings abundance of Vexation with it. Not to insist on the rest of the Disquiets that attend it: The unreasonable Fears it infuses into the Soul, by scaring it with fantastick and imaginary Dangers, which may come to pass; and perhaps
would,

would, if this World were govern'd according to the Rules of human Wisdom, and an uninterrupted Train of reasonable Causes: The vast Desires it fills us with, as well from the Consideration of the Capacity and Comprehensiveness of the Soul, as from the good Opinion it cherishes in Men of their Abilities: The Jealousies it subjects Men to, from the same Reason, of making them self-conceited, and imagining sufficient Honours and Respects are not paid them; with other Doubts, Impatiencies, and restless Emulations, which are, if not the necessary, yet the usual Fruits of Wisdom in Possession: Besides the sowing and corrupting all that Gayety of Heart, and chearful Temper, Men would otherwise be of; there being nothing more observ'd to make Men peevish, fretful and morose, impatient of Opposition, and imperious in Conversation, than a retir'd and studious Life, and a close, severe way of Thinking, and Examining Matters.

Not to insist, at last, upon the Danger there is of parting with this Knowledge Men have had in their Possession, in a very little Time, by the Treachery of an unfaithful Memory, by the Accident of some strong Disease, by the Dryness and Defects of Old Age; or, lastly, by the Stroke of Death, after which, *there is no more Remembrance of the Wise Man, than of the Fool; seeing that which now is, in the Days to come shall be forgotten.* Not to insist at large on all these, the Painfulness of getting, the Trouble of possessing, and the Fear of losing Wisdom, all which do most abundantly argue its Vanity; we may suppose a Man, inspired as *Solomon*, with Natural Wisdom, and fully assured of keeping it till Death; yet it would not much contribute to his being happy in this Life.

There is no Man, let him place his Happiness in what he will, but either wants an Accession of some

new

new Thing he desires, or the Removal of some old Inconvenience, or else a firm Continuance of the State he is already in ; all which depending mostly on the Wills of other Men, or on Accidents in Nature, which are varying every Day, uncertain, unsecure to be relied upon, not possible to be fore-seen ; or, if fore-seen, to be prevented ; it is not the Wisdom of this World that can make or keep Men happy.

What if the wisest Man on Earth, wants, to compleat his Happiness, a new Accession of Estate, or an Inheritor to what he has, or Virtue, Wisdom and Sobriety in that Inheritor ; which way shall Wisdom and Understanding make Provision of these Things ? Since, as Solomon tells us, *Prov. ix. 11. That Bread is not to the Wise, nor yet Riches to Men of Understanding, nor yet Favour to Men of Skill, but Time and Chance happeneth to them all.* But if he should have an Estate, and want an Heir, he would, it may be, do like Solomon, *Ch. 2. v. 18. Hate all his Labour which he had taken under the Sun, because he was to leave it to a Stranger after him.* But if it were a Son, *Who knoweth whether he shall be a Wise Man, or a Fool ? Yet he shall have Rule over all my Labour, wherein I have laboured, and shewn my self wise under the Sun : And, surely, this is also Vanity.* And let no Man think it is unworthy of a wise Man, or below him, to desire, or set his Heart upon such Things as these ; or want them, to compleat his Happiness : For Solomon's Experience, and a very little Insight into Human Nature, will assure him it is otherwise.

What if the wisest Man living want to remove some Bar and Hindrance to his Happiness, (for it is with wise Men sometimes, as it was with proud Haman ; who, tho' he was the Second Person of an Hundred Twenty Seven Provinces, and received the
Bows

Bows and Adorations of all the Princes in the *East*; yet was not quiet for the Stiffness of *Mordecai*, one inconsiderable *Jew*; they want some little Matter or other in their way to be removed, that troubles all their Peace and Quiet: And their Wisdom commonly is as little able to help them out, as Folly it self would be; whether the Bar be put by natural Accidents, or by the Obstinacy and Opposition of some Reasonable Agents.

For the first, Of Accidents: 'Tis acknowledg'd, that *no Wisdom is a Match for Chance*: But for the latter, Opposition of Men; one might think, that Wisdom might deal well enough with that; but the contrary is commonly seen: For, What if a Man know both the Tempers, and the several Interests of Men, and understand the whole Art of Business, and the Management of practical Affairs? Since it happens very frequently, that the Passions and Inclinations of Men do apparently prevail against their true Interest; so that, to deal with them in the way of Reason, is, to lose one's Labour on one hand: and sometimes Interest prevails against the strongest Inclinations, and the Bent of all their Passions; so that to deal with them in the way of Nature, is to lose one's Labour on the other side; and sometimes some unreasonable Pet, some trifling Jealousy, and some ill-grounded Error, prevails against Men's Interest and Inclinations, and frequently their Judgments too. So that if a Man's Happiness depend upon his being able to deal with others, (as it often does) it is, at least, an even Lay, that the Superior Wisdom shall not be successful; and if he chance to light upon one that is as wise as himself, there is some Reason seen why he does not gain his Point, but no great Comfort in the Consideration.

But if, in the Third Place, a Man's Happiness require a Continuance in the State he is already in, it

is not all the Wisdom of the World that can secure it to him. What Wisdom is it that secures Men from setting their Affections on the perishing Things of this Life? Where is the Philosophy that can hinder a Man from loving his Estate, or his Friends, immoderately? What Art or Understanding calls Men off from doting on their Children, from liking even every thing they say or do, from finding Wit in all their Words, and Grace and Comeliness in every Action? So that, when Death deprives them of their Friends, their Favourites, or their Children, their Sorrows are then multiplied, according to their foolish Fancies; and they have then a number of most solid, true, substantial Torments and Regrets, equal to that of their imaginary and conceited Pleasures; and in this Case, they lose much more than ever they truly had: For, wretched is the After-Game that wise Men play, as well as Fools, on these Occasions: And there is no greater Mistake, than to think, that the Wisdom of this World (of which I have all along been speaking) is a Preservative against the Mischiefs of unreasonable and unruly Sorrows. For, Whether it be, that wise Men think they know the Value of their Losses better than the rest; or whether their Senses are refin'd by Speculation, and they become thereby more susceptible of these sad Impressions; or from what other Reason, they are commonly more stricken with those Accidents than other Men, and more impatient and untoward under them. So that, upon a serious Recollection, 'tis an hard thing to find the Advantage of Worldly Wisdom, above the Plainness and Simplicity of common Men: It contributes as little to Men's Happiness; *it is also Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*

And if it be thus with Wisdom, (as might be proved from endless Instances) which is, without
Contra-

Contradiction, and without Comparison, infinitely superior to either Pleasure, Honours, or Riches, there will be less need of enlarging much on any of them, or proving them improper for the procuring or preserving Men's Happiness: But because the World is in Possession of other Opinions of these Things; and more Men live by Example, than by Rules of Reason; and are more sensible of Pleasures, and the rest, than capable of being Wise; a Word or two of each of them.

2dly, Therefore of Pleasures: It is certain, That the Happiness of this Life is that (and no other than that) which Men esteem their Happiness; so that Men are never the more or less happy for placing their Content and Pleasure in Things solid, or light, ridiculous or grave, superficial or substantial; because it is the Opinion Men have of Things, and not the Things themselves that make Men happy. He that is worth 100000 *l.* yet thinks it is too little for his Purposes and Ends, is not happier than he that is Master of an 100 *l.* and thinks it is enough for him: He that has all the World, besides the particular Thing he wants, is still unhappy, if he place his Happiness in what he wants. So that 'tis false and foolish too, to deny the Happiness of this Life, to consist in *Pleasure*, if by Pleasure we would only mean *a State of being pleas'd, a Rest and Acquiescence of the Mind in the Condition Men are in.* And *Epicurus*, fairly understood, was in the right, before the Oracles of God declared the contrary; if they too did not rather only change the Particulars, in which Men ought to seek and place their Pleasures and their Happiness, and determin'd them to Things certain, constant, solid, and more durable than the Light of natural Reason could discover to them. And therefore, when King *Solomon* declaims against Pleasures; and says, *they are Vanity and Vexation*

tion of Spirit ; he means especially Men's criminal Delights, their wicked and unlawful Pleasures, and those polluted Joys that ruin both the Soul and Body ; and which, by way of Eminency, have gotten the Name of *Pleasure* fixt peculiar to them. But when he speaks of the Vanity of other innocent Diversions and Delights, it is then with respect to their Shortness and Uncertainty ; their Emptiness, and dissatisfying Nature ; the disproportionable Returns they make to Men's Desires, the Pains they are at to compass them, the Disquiets and Impatiencies of waiting for them, and the speedy Flights they take from them : So that 'tis hard to say, or name the Point of Time, in which they exist. And as little can be said in Behalf of *Honours* or of *Riches*. They are, indeed, both of them exceeding useful, and exceeding necessary to the World ; but they are much more serviceable to Others, than to their own Masters ; *they* are commonly the last People they make happy, if at all. What serves the Pomp and Honour of a Coronet, the Veneration of a Mitre, and the Terror of a Judge to them themselves ? They are serviceable to the keeping Dignity and Decency in the Commonwealth, to the preserving Unity and Order in the Church, and to the Security of Men's Lives and Families, and Reputations and Estates ; but all the Benefit their Masters find in them, is from the Reflection of those Honours from the meanest and most miserable People : And if their Servants and Dependants are not happy, or respected, it is manifest, they think themselves dishonour'd and abus'd ; and consequently their Happiness, which is placed in these Things, is exceedingly precarious, and in every Man's Power to interrupt and spoil. And besides, the Happiness of being Honourable, or very Rich, is much abated by the Restraint that is laid upon Men, of owning or confessing

feeling it: For whatever other Men, or whatever a Man thinks of himself, yet it is not come to that pass yet, that Men dare publickly boast themselves happy for either Honour or Riches: They rather chuse to pass some sober, mortifying Sentence on those States, and deprecate the Mischiefs that do commonly attend them.

Now tho' Men understand them pretty well, yet 'tis some kind of Trouble to conceal their Happiness, and not to tell in what their Vanity and Folly do most abound. Not to enumerate the Dangers and Misfortunes these two States subject Men to, of being insolent, oppressive, vain, luxurious, thoughtless, and abundance of other Mischiefs that conspire against Men's Happiness in these Conditions; few are the Instances of those whom Wealth and Honours have made happier than they were before, and many of those whom those two States have betray'd and ruin'd. But,

II. Altho' these several Things would really much conduce to the bettering Men's Conditions, and procuring to them Happiness; yet Man would be but little better for them, because no Man knows what is truly good for him in this Life, and most convenient to the attaining of that End. Tho' all of them should in their own Natures, and in the Opinion of the World, be very good, and fitted to make their Masters happy; yet the Circumstances of Men's Affairs are so different and intricate, and the Tempers of Men so humourfome and uncertain, and the Accidents of Fortune so strange and many, that, it may be, that which would make Ten Thousand People happy, shall contribute to one Man's Misery: That which would make a Man happy this Day, shall To-Morrow, perhaps, undo him. Nay, That in which Men have been happy many Years, is that which will at last turn to their great Grief and Misery.

Misery. So short is our Fore-sight, and so vain and weak all our Endeavours, either to wish for, to pursue, or to preserve what is truly good for us in this Life.

What wilt thou give me, (said Abraham to God,) seeing I am childless? When God had hardly made an end of promising *to be his Shield, and his exceeding great Reward*: As if it had hardly been in God's Power to make him happy any other way, than by giving him an Heir, instead of *Eliezer of Damascus*. But when the Day of Trial and Temptation came, and this so long'd-for Heir was to be sacrificed and killed by him himself, there is no doubt but the Torment of that Thought did far exceed all the Delights that he had ever taken in that Son; and he was so far from thinking a Son would make him happy, that he found it was the only thing that could reduce him to the extreamest Misery a Mortal Man is capable of.

What could be more honourable for *Jephthah*, than from a wretched and despised Outlawry, to be intreated by the Elders of his People to return, and take the Rule of *Israel* into his Hands? What Vows and Prayers could seem more proper and convenient, both for *Israel* and himself, than Vows and Prayers for Victory? Who is there, that, in those his Circumstances, can (even in Fancy) think, that any thing was half so necessary to compleat his Happiness, as Conquest over *Ammon*? And who but would have thought that grateful Offer which he made to God, before his going out to fight, might have been a kind of Tye and Obligation to have both gotten and secured him Happiness? Yet all was contrary: He had better have continued a despis'd Exile, or perished by the Sword of *Ammon*; for the Sun that rose upon his Victory, and saw not an happier Man in all the Host of *Israel*, nor a more glorious and

triumphant Conqueror elsewhere, yet shut not in at Even, a more deplorable and wretched Creature.

One Man fancies, that if he had but an Estate, he were compleatly happy ; he would use it with great Temperance himself, and do abundance of Good to others. He finds himself dispos'd to do a great many hospitable and generous Things, but wants Supplies agreeing to the Largeness of his Heart : He finds his Bowels yearn at Objects of Compassion, and would relieve them if he could : He only seeks for Riches, to oblige Mankind, and conciliate the Favour of God, and be entirely happy. But if, by Accident or Industry, he does grow rich, his Heart and Purposes are commonly changed with his Condition, or his Desires grow even with his Substance, and he is still as unable to do the good he desired to do, as before ; the Poor are still as poor and empty as they were, tho' his Bowels still yearn on, and the Man perswades himself he longs to be doing good ; but, to his great Discomfort, wants Ability. This is the best of the Case, that a Man with his Riches does no harm, altho' he does no good ; but it seldom rests here, he is either tempted to forget God, and sacrifice to his own Drags, or falls by degrees into a State of Luxury and all Excess, and makes the Things that should have been for his Good, an Occasion of his falling ; and is to his Cost convinced, that 'tis better to continue Poor, with good Desires, than Rich without them ; or with them, when they come alone ; and that he was not made to be happy by Riches, but was mistaken in the Means of compassing his End.

Another Man believes a Place of Honour and Authority, would make up all his Wants, and compleat his Happiness ; and thinks withal, he should be capacitated to do a great deal of Service to his Country in it ; he should right the wronged, and relieve

lieve the oppressed, and do Justice to the Poor and Needy, with abundance of other notable good Turns: But when he is in Honour and Authority, he grows, it may be, proud and insolent, regards not Right or Wrong so much as Favour and Convenience; uses his Interest and Power to private Ends and evil Purposes; and is, instead of being happier in that higher Station, but more involved in Troubles, and perplex'd in Mind: And when he turns him to his Inside, sees he was not made for Honours and great Places, and that his clambring upwards brought him not to Happiness, but to the Danger of a great Fall, and an uneasy Seat in the mean while.

Another thinks, his Good might be procur'd by Oratory and the Power of Eloquence, and spends his Lamps and Nights, in reading the Works of the great Masters of that Faculty, and turning over *Cicero* and *Demosthenes*; but had better spend an Hour or two in reading of their Lives and Ends: To see to what unworthy Purposes those mighty Parts were oft abus'd, what foul and wicked Acts those Streams of Eloquence were to wash away; what Emulations, Strifes, Contentions and Debates they were perpetually engag'd in, and how fatal it was to Both, *to speak beyond Comparison*.

The best Tongues have the most Causes, but they have commonly the worst too; and if they get greater Estates, they get the more ill Will and Odium with them. And 'tis hardly possible for them to thrive exceedingly, but to the Wrong of some, and the Undoing of others. And who can think of being happy at the Expence of Truth and Justice, with any Comfort? Besides, that an eloquent Tongue and fluent is an Allurement to talking much, and holding up a Controversy, which engages Men (in Opposition) to say a great many unkind Things, and a great many foolish, and a great many false;

and if true, yet a great many vain and unnecessary Things: It puts Men on the Rack, and often sharpens the Wit to a degree of Keenneſs, that ends, without great Care, in Spitefulneſs and Ill-Nature; and, rather than want an Answer, or the making an handsome Period up, the Men of Wit and Fluence either chuſe, or happen, to loſe a faſt Friend, to diſoblige a great Man, and create a powerful Enmity. 'Tis like a ſharp and double-edg'd Knife; for one piece of Service it does its Maſter, it cuts his Fingers twice: And is ſo far from being fitted to make Men happy, that, as hardly One in a Thouſand attains to it, ſo 'tis hardly fit for One of an Hundred Thouſand.

Another Man has a brave Heart, and ſtrong Sinews, and fancies he is fitted for the Camp, and is deſign'd for Happineſs by Victories and Triumphs: But theſe are commonly the Dreams of Men at Eaſe, and the gay Reſults of Wine and good Company. He thinks not on the Toils and Hardſhips of that Life he meets withal upon Experience; the Straits of inconvenient Lodging, unwholſome Diet, and inclement Seaſons; the perillous Attempts, the Insolence of Superiors, and Inferiors Mutinies; the ſpiteful Emulations, the baſe and infamous Detractions; the wicked Notions of Religion, Morals, and true Honour; with the ridiculous Punſtilio's of falſe: The ſevere revengeful Proſecutions of their idle Quarrels, the frequent Perjuries, the raging Blaſphemies, the horrible Enormities, Injuſtices, Rapes, and Beſtial Villanies, that commonly attend that way of living. And yet even this, and all the reſt of the particular Conditions I have mention'd; and a great many more I have omitted, are, in the Opinion of the World, fitted to make Men happy, with the Happineſs of this Life; and moſt of them, it may be, in their own Natures, would in ſome wiſe conduce to it,

it, if it were not for our Blindness in seeking, our Ignorance in using, and our Folly in abusing them. But,

III. Though a Man should be so fortunate as to light upon what was good for him at present, yet he would have no great Reason to exult, because his Good may be short-liv'd, and change its Nature in a little time. *For who can tell a Man what shall be after him?*

This Head does in some measure fall in with the other; and therefore, the less will serve to shew its Truth: And there is no need of proving this by Arguments or Deductions of Reason; there is only need that Men should open their Eyes and Ears, and attend to the Instances that meet them every Day, of private and of publick Persons, Families and Kingdoms, of Friends and Enemies, of Strangers and Acquaintances; how varying and uncertain all the Conditions of human Life are; how little any Man can promise to himself, or any else, the Continuance of the State he is already in; what sudden Turns of Fortune thrust Men out of their Felicity, which they imagined, would have lasted them their Lives long; how many little unforeseen, unthought of Accidents disturb, and quite unsettle the most fixt and steady Course of Happiness? How one unlucky lowring Day rises, and interrupts the Peace and Joy of our whole Lives, and makes them set in Sorrow and Despair. *Boast not (saith Solomon) of To-Morrow, for thou canst not tell what a Day may bring forth, Prov. xxvii. 1.*

Æmilius Paulus was the greatest and the happiest Roman in his Time, for many Years; he had four Sons of great Hopes, and thinking two of them enough to propagate his Name, he gave the other two to be adopted into the bravest and the noblest Families of Rome. And having conquered *Perseus*,

and his Kingdoms, (the Foil of four preceding Generals) he brought the King and all his Children Captives, to grace his Triumph and victorious Entry into *Rome*. But mark, how Fate with them, and with us the Providence of God, disposes of Events. The King design'd for Misery, had all his Children then about him, the greatest Comfort that his bad Estate could then bear; and the triumphant Victor lost his eldest Son a few Days before his glorious Entry, and his youngest three Days after. And tho' all Men thought before, that *Persens* was the greatest and the saddest Instance of the Uncertainty of human Happiness, yet then the Scene was chang'd, and all the Pity fell upon the Old and Miserable Conqueror.

There is no body, scarce, whose Knowledge, or whose Reading does not furnish him with Instances enough, and too many, of this nature, to confirm him in the Opinion, that the Happiness of this Life is of a very short and uncertain Continuance; and that no Man can have Reason to exult, or be secure in his present State, whilst liable to so many lamentable Accidents, and surrounded with such Hazards.

Since, then, (to conclude) all these Things are so; since all is Vanity, and Vexation of Spirit; since there is no true Happiness to be found in any of those Things, in which Men chiefly place it, What must become of us? Are we brought into this World, to be perpetually deluded with the Hopes of being happy; yet nothing in it for to build those Hopes upon? Must we wander up and down, like poor bewildred Strangers, in quest of what we are never likely to obtain? Nature has planted in us all, we find, Hopes and Desires of being happy; but we are left, it seems, to seek it where we can; and to feel

it out, like hood-wink'd People, in perpetual Maze and Winding.

And is there then no Answer to these Questions in the Text?

Yes, there is : And he that put these Questions, gives himself a full and satisfying Answer to them all ; but it is so far from my Text, that I must but just repeat it ; for it is the very last Sentence in the Book : *Hear the Conclusion of the whole Matter : Fear God, and keep his Commandments ; for God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

If you desire to know what is good for Man in this Life, I will tell you : *Fear God, and keep his Commandments* : That is good for Man in this Life : *All the Days of his vain Life which he spendeth as a Shadow.* Though there be many things that increase Vanity, yet there is something he may fasten on, that has no Vanity, nor carries any manner of Vexation with it ; and that is, *Fearing God, and keeping his Commandments.*

Time and Chance make mighty Work and Alteration in every other State, but have no Power to interrupt and spoil the Peace and Happiness of this.

And, as the Ignorance and great Uncertainty of what may happen, argues the Vanity of all these other States, and is a great Discouragement to the pursuing them so warmly, and so zealously ; (*For who can tell a Man what shall be after him ?*) so the Certainty of what will follow the Neglect or the Performance of this our Duty, *fearing God, and keeping his Commandments*, is as great an Encouragement on the other hand, to the doing it : And that is, the Certainty of Judgment ; *For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil.*

So that now we know *what shall be after us* : And knowing what is good for Man in *this* Life, is also good for him in *another* ; we have our Answer to the Questions in the Text : And since we are convinced of the Vanity of all Things else, let us, at last, attend to this Divine Conclusion of the whole Matter, and *fear God, and keep his Commandments.*





S E R M O N II.

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

A T

W H I T E - H A L L,

F E B R U A R Y the xiiith, 169 $\frac{2}{3}$.

E Z E K I E L XXXIII. 31.

*And they come unto thee as the People cometh,
and they sit before thee as my People, and they
hear thy Words, but they will not do them :
For with their Mouth they shew much Love,
but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.*

THese Words are part of God's Complaint
to and by the Prophet, of the People's
Non-Proficiency under the Ministry of
Ezekiel, and the other Messengers of God's Word ;
notwithstanding all the Shew and fair Appearance
that

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that they made, notwithstanding all the Forwardness they came with to the House of God, the attentive Diligence they sat with, and the Love and Liking they pretended to the Sermons of the Prophets.

The Description of this is very plainly laid down in the Text; and it shall be my First Business, to consider it as plainly, and my Second to assign some Reasons, as well as I can, why both the Prophet's heretofore, and now our Ministry, is so unedifying and ineffectual.

Son of Man, (saith God to the Prophet, in the Verse before the Text) *the Children of thy People still are talking against thee, by the Walls and in the Doors of the Houses.* By talking against the Prophet, is here meant *about the Prophet*; for it appears both from this, and the following Verses, that they liked the Prophet mightily; but because they acted contrary to his Instructions, they are said to talk *against him*, tho' in Words they talked in his Commendation: *And speak one to another, every one to his Brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the Word that cometh forth from the Lord.*

There could not, one would think, be a better Disposition in the World than this; they were not only careful and ready to hear the Word themselves, but zealous also of their Neighbour's good. They invited each his Brother with great Tenderness, *Come, I pray you, and hear what is the Word that cometh forth from the Lord.* Such a good Forwardness was very pleasing heretofore to David; *I was glad*, (saith he, *Psal. cxxii. 1.*) *when they said unto me, Let us go into the House of the Lord.* But it ended not in Invitations, for they came accordingly.

They come, (saith the Text) *as the People cometh*, *i. e.* in great Bands and Companies; they resort to the

the House of God in such Multitudes, that it looks like the going forth of a Nation to fight, or the gathering together of a People to some mighty Purpose; to speak in the modern Phrase, the Place was throng'd exceedingly where-ever this *Ezekiel* preached or prophesy'd. And,

2dly, *They sit before thee*, saith God, *as my People*. They come and sit as People that profess to belong to God peculiarly; as People that would be signaliz'd and known by their Relation to him, as distinguish'd from the whole World. They sit as gravely and demurely in the House of God, they listen and attend as heedfully, as is imaginable; so that you could not chuse but take them for God's People. There's all the external Tokens and the Gestures of Attention and Devotion possible to be shewn; and there's no Man but would think they met to good Purpose. And,

3dly, *They hear thy Words*; they did not make this Noise and Invitation of each other, and resorting to the House of God themselves in such great Companies, for nothing but to gaze about, or sleep, or talk impertinently, or worse; but to *hear* the Prophet; and they heard him. They came with full design and purpose to hear what was the Word that came forth from the Lord; that was their Errand and Intention, to be instructed in the Will of God, to know his Precepts and Commands from the Mouth of his Messenger and Prophet; and that they heard.

But, *Lastly*, they did not only hear, but like, approve, and love the Word of God: *With their Mouth they shew much Love*. And lo, (saith the Verse following the Text) *thou art unto them as a very lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument*: They did not only like the Song, it seems, but the way of singing it, the Grace and Air with which he set it off; they did

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did not only approve the *Matter* of the Prophet's Sermon, but the Manner of its Delivery too ; the comely Mien with which he spoke, his graceful Way of Elocution, and the harmonious Cadence of his Voice. He had all the external Accomplishments, as well as internal, that a Man could want and wish for ; and the People took great Notice of it, and had him in Esteem accordingly. But notwithstanding all these advantageous Ornaments in the Prophet, and all this Forwardness to hear, and favourable Disposition in the People towards him ; yet it happen'd to his Sermons, as it does to lovely Songs, they pleased the Ear, and struck the Fancy for the present, but made no deep and sensible Impression on the Mind and Understanding ; they did not influence them to practise any whit, what they so long'd to hear, and liked when heard and uttered by him ; for so it follows in the Text : *They hear thy Words, but they will not do them. With their Mouth they shew much Love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness. This People (as is elsewhere said) honoureth me with their Lips, but their Heart is far from me.* Which is the Second Thing I am to speak to, and if I can, assign some Reasons how the Prophet's Sermons heretofore, and now our Ministry, is so unedifying and ineffectual : And,

First, One Reason of some People's Non-Proficiency, may be this very Curiosity here described, this Itch of hearing one that preach'd so softly, and so sweetly, and with so good a Grace, *That his Words were to them as a very lovely Song, of one that bath a pleasant Voice.* They came to hear the Word of the Lord, because it sounded sweetly from his Mouth : Because his Voice was tuneable ; his Gestures and Deportment manly, comely, and excellent ; his Periods round and flowing, and his Elocution sweet and powerful. And when Men only

only come to take in *Sound*, they will unavoidably return *empty*: When they only hunt for *Words*, they must not think of catching *Things of Substance*; and they who are intent upon the *Manner* only, must let slip the *Matter*. Not that all these Qualifications are not very desirable and advantageous both to Prophet and to People too; and that the one may wish for, and the other labour to attain these good Accomplishments, to the better carrying on the Work, and the greater Edification; but that there is Danger of laying too much Strefs upon these Matters: The People find themselves mov'd and affected for the present, and are thereby tempted to regard no farther Edification, or to think they have already edified sufficiently; mistaking oft, the moving of their Fancies, for Operations on their Judgments and their Understandings; and the Prophet is thereby in Danger to be tempted to proceed in Ways so easy, and so acceptable, if he have not a good Share of Grace, and Honesty, and Prudence.

It cannot well, indeed, be otherwise, that Men who come with a light and trifling Spirit, prepared, and, as it were, resolv'd to be pleas'd with nothing but external Garbs and Modes of speaking, should come to any Purpose, or return the wiser, or the better, let the Prophet say what-e'er he can. It is in this case that Men seldom find any more than they seek for; and 'tis very natural to think, that Men that only come to gratify their Curiosity, to hear some new Things, some fine delightful Notions, and some fanciful Discourse, and to observe the Method and the Style, and Way of Preaching, should go away dissatisfy'd, if they meet *not* with these Things, and perfectly unedify'd if they do.

Another Reason of the People's Non-Proficiency, may be, their having *no Opinion*, or Conceit at all
of

of the Prophet's Abilities ; this is a worse Extream than the other ; very discouraging of the Prophet, damps his Spirits mightily, and checks the Vigour of his Thought, and causes him sometimes to slacken his Endeavours. But whatever Effect it has on him, it cannot possibly have any good one on the People. They are thereby pre-disposed to meet whatever shall be offered them, with Neglect or supercilious Contempt : They have pre-judg'd his Performances already, and all he says, seems but as idle Talking. When once Men entertain a Prejudice against Men's Persons or Abilities, it is not easy to be reconcil'd, or to attend to what they shall deliver. Either they will not let themselves be perswaded, that what is said, is true and reasonable ; or Truth itself becomes unacceptable from them : Men hear, and see, and judge, by their Affections. When once we have debas'd a Man in our Opinion, his very Looks become unlovely, his Actions are ungraceful, and all his Wisdom seems as Foolishness ; the Spirit of Contradiction seizes on us, and we are ready to do Violence to our *own* Reason, rather than allow of *his*. The Complaint is of long standing, that most Men mind more *who it is that* speaks, than *what it is* that's spoken. So that since 'tis plain, Affections difference People's Persons, 'tis also plain they byas and corrupt Men's Judgments ; and as the Excess corrupts them in their Favour, so want of Love corrupts them to their Prejudice. But, as I said, this is the worse Extream of the two ; for a good Opinion will improve the meanest Performances, some way or other, to its own Advantage ; whereas a bad one will not edify under the ablest Ministry : So true it is, that light and idle People bring the Satisfaction along with them, which they think they come to seek for in these Places. They come, they think, to be pleas'd ; but, indeed, they are pleas'd before

with Fame, or something else, and therefore come. One may say on this, as St. *James* says on another Occasion, *My Brethren, these things ought not so to be.*

A Third Occasion of People's Non-Proficiency may be, their having by their Choice, or Accident, or Education, taken up some odd Opinions and peculiar Fancies in Religion, contrary to what is commonly and authoritatively taught; and Men are frequently so fond of their own Conceits and private Notions, that they do not only entertain with great Dislike the Doctrines that oppose them, and the Reasons that confute them; but for *their* Sakes, they frequently reject and cast by all *besides*; they will not abide what they have nothing to object to, for the sake of something that dislikes them; that is, a Man must be of my side altogether, before he can talk acceptably; and if he do not agree with me in this or that Particular, then I will dissent from him in any other; which shews more love to our *selves* than *Truth*, and that we rather like to be *humour'd* than *convinc'd*. This is a very weak Occasion of Non-Proficiency; but as weak as it is, it is too common; and besides, I am assigning Reasons for such Effects as few or no Causes are sufficient for.

No, not even that which I am next in the *Fourth* place to assign, (*i. e.*) the evil Life and vicious Practice of the Prophets; for tho' the wicked Conversation of the Priest, be the most horrible Reproach imaginable, and ministers occasion to the greatest Scandal possible, and shall be punish'd with the most intense Degree of Torment; yet it will by no means justify any Imitation of his evil Practice, or excuse the Neglect or Contempt of his Doctrines that are agreeable to Reason, and confirm'd by Scriptures: Because it is certain, all Men are obliged to live by *Rule*, and not *Example*. And tho' the Priest be indispensibly obliged by all the Ties of Reason

Reason and Religion, to be himself the Example of the Rules of good Living, yet *his* Apostacy will cover no one's else from Blame or Punishment. Whether Priests, the more immediate Ministers in God's Service, are not tied to greater Sanctity and Strictness of Life, than other People, by God's Laws, may furnish Matter for Dispute, because the Laws of Virtue and the Precepts of Morality are general and common to all Mankind, together with the Priests; and all Men are obliged to be as good as possibly they can, and the Priests can be no more. But rather than contest this Matter now, I shall take it for granted, that Priests have a closer Obligation to live well and virtuously than other People, and that Vice as ill becomes *them*, as Corruption of the Law does a Judge, tho' all Men are alike obliged to Justice and Impartiality; or as want of Honour and Respect to a Prince becomes a Courtier, tho' all Men are alike obliged to pay them all they can, and all that's due, and neither Judge nor Courtier can do more. Yet notwithstanding this their closer Obligation to live holily and well, than other People's, *their* Relaxation of the Reins of Discipline, and living in Contradiction and Defiance to their Doctrines, as they cannot encourage any else to follow them in Practice; so they ought not to prejudice the Truth or Virtue of those Doctrines, or to hinder the Operation of them to the Amendment of Men's Lives. They do, indeed, too commonly and too easily do it; but 'tis with no Reason; there is no tolerably inferring from one Man's evil Practice to another's evil Practice, and much less his Unbelief; there is no concluding the People's Security from the Wickedness or the Self-Condernation of the Priest.

The Scandal that is given by wicked Ministers, shall heat their Furnace Seven times hotter than the
rest,

rest; but the Scandal *taken* shall not lessen any one's Degree of Punishment; whoever offends by Example, shall be as guilty, and liable to as great an Infliction as the Crime it self deserves, and should have had, had there been no Example given; supposing that there be a Rule to walk by. *For it is Rule we are to live, and shall be judg'd by, and not Example.* An Example is, indeed, of use, to shew us that the Rule is practicable, and to excite us to Imitation; but every one in Truth is bound to be himself the Example of the Rule. *It is impossible,* our Saviour says, *but that Offences should come; and wo to that Man by whom they come; it were better for him that a Millstone were hanged about his Neck, and he thrown into the Sea.* This will unquestionably be the Fate of evil Pastors, that by vicious and disorderly Living, give Occasion of Offence and Falling to weak Christians; but the falling thus, and being thus offended, is not hereby lessened or excused; their Misfortunes do not grow the lighter. As the one should not give, and shall be punished for giving, so the other should not take, and shall be punished for taking that Offence, against a plain Rule and positive Command to the contrary.

In very dubious and uncertain Matters, an Example may be as reasonable and justifiable a Byass as any else whatever, if it be of one that is of presum'd Integrity and Understanding; because the following such an Example, is following the best Reason we have, and acting according to the best of our Understanding; which is, in dubious Matters, or such as lie beyond our Reach, chusing the best for our selves we can. But in Matters of Morality and plain Practice, where every one's Understanding is his Rule, and a sufficient one too, there, not an Hundred, nor a Thousand Instances, are sufficient to acquit a Man (no, not even to himself) offending against
D a known

a known Rule; for it is not *Number*, but *Truth* that we must follow. Methinks I need not argue much in this behalf, to shew that People should not follow the Steps of wicked Prophets, whose Example they do commonly (and, truly, most deservedly) despise and hate. But the Commonness of the Excuse that People make, that they cannot profit under an evil Ministry, will do more than justify what has been said on this Account: But it is, indeed, too near to flattering of our selves, to seek for Causes at such Distance, which lurk at home so near us, even in our Hearts. And tho' the Parable of the Sower of Seed were primarily intended by our Saviour to shew the Impediments, that would obstruct the Propagation of the Gospel, at its first Preaching; yet it is very proper, and well fitted to express the several Causes that obstruct its Influence on the Minds of Men, in its Progression, even in every After-Age and Generation: And to some Enquirers of the Non-proficiency of Hearers under the Ministry, we may assign this Fifth Cause:

5thly, Some are Hearers *by the way side, where the Word is sown; but when they hear, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their Hearts.* Some hear by *Chance*, and 'tis more than so, that they edify not at all with it. They stroll about like Vagrants, and light upon the Word of God, as on a Thing they thought not of, and part with it as easily. They come without Design, without any Consideration, or Preparation of the Heart; and as the Sower cannot scatter with so even an Hand, but some will fall by the Way-side, besides the Furrows and prepared Ground; so the Voice and Word of the Prophets will reach some that are as ill prepared to hear it, and who make so short and little use of it, that they can hardly say they *lost* it. It is no Difficulty for Satan to snatch that away,
they

they found at unawares, and cared so little for, and held so weakly, and so slightly. 'Tis true, indeed, that these unthinking Stragglers are sometimes caught by something accidentally delivered to them; and from a wavering and uncertain Faith, and loose Morals, are suddenly reclaim'd and fix'd, both in their Judgment, and a steady Course of Vertue and Obedience; but this is such an extraordinary, unusual Operation of the Spirit of God upon the Mind, that as there is no Promise of it made to any one, so there ought to be no Expectation of it. The least that any one can bring towards his Edification, is an Intention and Desire of being edify'd; no one in Reason can expect to be so benefited against, or without their Will and Inclination. But neither is a previous, bare Intention only, to be edify'd, sufficient; for many come with this, and yet return as empty as they came: It is also necessary, that some after-Care succeed; for, *Satan*, like a Bird of Prey, *cometh immediately, and takes away the Seed*, scarce cover'd over, *that was sown in their Hearts*; diverts them presently, and will not suffer them to meditate, or think deliberately on what they heard. He hates Consideration in the Sons of Men, and knows it is his mortal Enemy, and in a little time would overthrow his Kingdom, and therefore uses all his Art and Cunning to prevent it.

Another sort there are, our Saviour tells us, of Auditors, that are represented by the Seed falling on the Stony Ground; *These hear the Word, and anon with Joy receive it; but having no Root, endure but for a time; for when Persecution or Affliction ariseth because of the Word, they are presently offended.* Abundance of People come to Church with very good Designs and Purposes, and behave themselves well and devoutly there; listen attentively, and are very much affected with what they hear,

and stedfastly purpose to put in Practice what they find so applicable to, and what concerns themselves. But when they come to make the Experiment, and put their good Resolves in Execution; the Hold that Ease and Pleasure have taken on them is not easily let go; the Difficulties and Severities of Virtue and Religion stare them in the Face, and appear so formidable and unacceptable to human Nature, that they immediately give up their better Resolutions, and fall again into their usual Courses. They hear with Joy, and receive with Joy, and apply with Joy, and resolve with Joy to profit themselves of what they hear; but the Afflictions of Repentance and Obedience, of Mortification, and the want of what they have so long been used to; the Prosecution of Delights and Pleasures, that continually pursue and haunt the Mind; in a word, the leaving off delightful Things, and taking up unusual and unacceptable ones, is a great Cause of Non-Proficiency. The Doctrine is agreeable to Reason, they see its great Convenience and Necessity indeed; but the Difficulty of the Practice spoils all, and sets them back again, and leaves them as their Resolutions found them; they would be admirable Christians, if nothing but Consent of Reason and Judgment were wanting; if they might live as they desire and do, without forsaking what they like, and taking up with what they like by no means: If believing what we say, and firmly purposing to act accordingly, were to edify, they would edify most abundantly; but as to practising what they hear, they say with Naaman, *The Lord pardon them in that thing.*

Another sort of unprofiting Hearers, are represented by our Saviour, by the Seed that fell among the Thorns, --- *Such as hear the Word, and the Cares of this World, and the Deceitfulness of Riches, and the Lusts of other things entering in, choak the Word.*

and

and it becometh unfruitful. The former would have profited but for Pleasure, these would be edify'd, but that Gain and Business hinder them. They hear right, and understand and apply right, but their Minds are estrang'd and carry'd off, by their intense Desires of growing Rich, and by the Multiplicity of their Concerns, and Clutter of Affairs. The World has taken such hold and fastening on their Hearts, that when they find themselves moved by any thing we say, and are inclined to loosen and relax, to mind their better and more lasting Interest; it still throws out some Bait or other to detain and keep them, some weighty Thing or other interferences, and either voids their Resolutions quite, or else defers them to a more convenient Season; which gives another like Temptation, Means and Opportunity to enter, and obtain its Day of hearing; and so the Life is lost in a Circle of Resolutions and Defeats, in Promises and steadfast Purposes; and cold Complaints for want of Opportunities. As the Prophet accuses in the Text; *With their Mouth they shew much Love, but their Heart goeth after their Covetousness.* They are sensibly affected with what they hear and learn, and like it very well, and express their Liking in Desires and Resolutions to observe and practise it; but their Hearts, when they come to Tryal, fail them and deceive them, and can't be disentangled from their Business, and the Prosecution of their gainful Callings and Designs. When their Minds aspire to heavenly Things, this fatal Poise and Tendency to Worldly Wealth, clogs them, and drags them downwards still, altho' against their Reason and Resolutions; and if this Son's Preferment, and that Daughter's Fortune were secured, they could attend on God without Distraction; they would then forsake a vain and sinful World, and its deceitful Riches, and lay up better, and more lasting Treasures, in a better

Place, where neither Moth nor Rust doth corrupt, and where no Thieves breakthrough and steal; but before this comes to pass, the Man grows old, and sees his little Images in Children's Children, and Nature quickens him again to greater Fondness, and they must have their Portions from new Toils and new Anxieties; and the Cares of this World begin again, and the Deceitfulness of Riches choaks the Word that hath so oft been heard with Joy and Gladness; and notwithstanding all his Approbation and his Resolutions to improve, yet it becomes unfruitful.

I know not well, how proper you may think it to assign such Causes of Men's Non-proficiency under the Ministry of Preaching, when the Pretence and End of Preaching is to remove those Causes and Impediments: It looks as if Physicians should excuse their ill Success, by assigning such and such Obstructions to the Energy of their Medicines, when 'tis the proper Business of their Art and Calling to remove those very Obstructions: It may rather seem to betray the Weakness of the Word of the Lord, to say that the Lusts and Pleasures, the Cares and Love of Riches hinder it from being fruitful, when 'tis that Word it self that is to mortify those Lusts, subdue those Longings, remove those Cares, and kill that Love of Riches at the very Root. To this we must say, that however powerfully and strongly the Spirit of God may sometimes operate on the Souls of Men, work off their Hearts and Inclinations from the Riches or the Pleasures of this Life, and change them unaccountably, and almost in an Instant; which no one can deny has sometimes, in some Cases, happen'd; yet this is extraordinary, and no-where promis'd, and therefore no-where to be look'd for, or depended on; it is like mighty, unexpected, undeserved Favours, to be accepted with all Joy and Thankfulness, and to be carefully im-
proved

proved to all Advantage; but 'tis what no one else must look for, tho' in the same Condition, and the same Necessity. The ordinary and usual Way is, arguing and enforcing People's Duties, by their proper Motives; shewing the Reasonableness, Convenience, and Necessity of their performing them; which must, for its Effect, depend upon the Grace of God, and on the Will, Capacity, and Teachableness of the Hearer: So that in the ordinary Conversion of a Sinner from the Evil of his Ways, these Three are unavoidably concern'd.

First, The Minister must do his Part; which is to shew the Unreasonableness of the Ways of Sin, the natural Turpitude, and unagreeable Deformity there is in Vice, how opposite it is to the Natural Light within, and to the Dictates of our Conscience; how prejudicial to them as they are Men, and live in this World, with respect to bodily Health, to Reputation, and a good Name, and to their thriving in their Callings. Next to the Reasonableness of Virtue and Obedience, he can only shew the Convenience and Necessity of complying with the Will of God; the Peace and Pleasure, and Content of Mind that constantly attend the doing it, together with the ineffable, eternal Recompence that follows it hereafter. Or, on the other hand, the Pain, Uneasiness, and terrible Anxiety of Heart, the Affliction of a fearful and suspicious Mind, the Reproaches of Reason, the Remorse of Conscience, and that Hell on Earth that constantly attends the Guilty, and the obstinately disobedient, together with a fearful looking-for of Judgment, that will certainly consign them over to Pains and Sorrows, that will know no Measure, nor no End. This is all the Minister can do, to urge Men to their Duties by their Fitness, by Promises and Threats, and by whatever other Motives are contained in Holy

Scriptures; to press them in, and out of Season, and to contribute all he can, to their producing their Effect. And tho' there may be mighty Difference in the Way and Manner of proposing Things, that some Men do it much more forcibly, and clearly, and convincingly than others, and in a much more acceptable way; yet even the best of them can do no more than just propose, and lay these Things before them; *Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but 'tis from God that the increase must come*; there is both need of his preventing and assisting Grace, and 'tis from him we must expect the Blessing. 'Tis certain, that without Him, of our selves we can do nothing; but it is as certain, that he never fails to give what Grace is necessary and sufficient for that purpose, if Men will use their best Endeavours, and employ his Gifts as he shall order and direct them. Where-ever any thing depends, for its Effect, on God and Man, in Conjunction and Co-operation together, we may be sure that God is never wanting to perform his Part, if Man will but do his; and tho' it may be difficult (in many Cases utterly impossible) for any one to know, or to describe the Methods and the Measures of God's Grace, in working on the Hearts and Minds of People to Conversion; yet of this we may be sure, that work it does, unless we our selves put some Hindrance or Impediment in its way; and of this we may be also full as sure, that the Operations of his Grace and Holy Spirit, do not at all depend upon our Knowledge or our Understanding, how and when they operate: And that therefore, there is no expecting or attending till it operate, that we may our selves begin; for Grace, like the Kingdom of God, comes not by Observation; but we must do our Duty all that possibly we can our selves, and God will not be wanting. So that no one can excuse or cover his Continuance in Sin, upon Pre-

tence, that the Grace of God will not help him out; that, for his part, he is very willing, and uses his utmost Endeavours to extricate and disentangle himself; but that the Grace of God is wanting to him, without which he cannot stir. That's true, that without the Grace of God he cannot extricate himself; but it neither is, nor can be true, that, if he be himself willing, and uses his utmost Endeavours, the Grace of God will fail; for it is by God's Grace that he is willing, and by God's Grace that he endeavours thus to free himself; for naturally, and of our selves, we are told, we can neither *will*, nor *do* any thing of that kind; and the applying all such Arguments and Motives to our Duty, as it hath pleased God to reveal to us, and the using all those Means and Instruments which he discovers to us, and designs for those good Purposes, is using and improving the Grace of God, that Grace that is ordinarily requisite and necessary to Conversion: So that the Guilt at length will unavoidably devolve upon the Offender only. God cannot possibly be wanting; the Prophet cannot easily, (*i. e.*) so far as to excuse the Offender; and therefore Men themselves are only chargeable, and they must look at home for their Conversion, or their Condemnation. From all which it will appear, that tho' the Objection be so far true, that it is the Work of God's Word, and proper Business of the Preacher, to cure these Evils, to remove these Obstacles, and to subdue these Lusts and evil Appetites that hinder the Word of God from taking its Effect, and to reduce the disobedient, and reclaim the wandring Sinner from his evil Ways; yet it is by no means true, that it is derogatory to the Grace of God, that it works not forcibly and irresistibly upon the Minds of Men, to their Conversion; nor to the Power of God's Word, in the Mouths and Sermons of his Messengers and Prophets, that

that their Preaching and Endeavours prove so ineffectual and unedifying; since all the Force they either do or can use, is natural and moral Suasion; they can but stir the Passions and Affections, and work upon the Reason and Understanding of People by suitable and proper Arguments; and whether they shall do that, depends very much upon the People themselves; but whether, when that is done, it shall prove effectual, (*i.e.*) shall influence them to Practice, depends entirely on them: They can but like Physicians, prescribe a true and proper Medicine, and tell the Dangers of continuing in that evil State; but still the Use and Application of this Remedy depends, and will depend upon the Patient.

It remains, that I make an Inference or two from what hath been said, and so conclude. And,

First, Since it is plain from the constant, ordinary, and usual Method of God's proceeding in the converting and changing the People's Minds, that they must, to make them blameable and punishable by him, be at Liberty, whether they will receive Instruction or no, and practise afterwards what they shall be convinced becomes their Duty; since it is plain, I say, they must be at their Liberty, it is also plain, that the Fault must lie upon themselves, and that they have it in their Power to mend: And since all the Causes that either have been, or that can be reasonably assign'd for People's Non-proficiency, under the ordinary and standing Ministry of Preaching, are such as do entirely depend upon the People themselves, there is no longer Time allowed for their Enquiries why, and their Complaining that they do *not* edify and profit more: For now the Power is in their Hands, and such a Power as may be for their Edification, or Destruction: Life and Death is set before them; the Bread of Life, the Word of God, that, as they chuse and use it, will be sure to

prove either the Savour of Death to Death, or else the Word of Everlasting Life and Health: And therefore, there is need of all their Care and Diligence in hearing and attending, treasuring up, and practising their Duties, that they may not come together for the worse, but better. As therefore every body owns they come to Church with a Design to hear, and be instructed in what they know not; or to be put in mind of what they knew, but had forgotten, and to be moved to practise it; so the least that they can do in common Kindness to themselves, is, to see they do not lose their Labour: But when it is moreover a Business of the greatest Moment and Importance in the World they are about, they are obliged undoubtedly to hear to purpose, and, to that end, to come with Minds prepared to hear the Truth, and to receive it kindly, tho' it thwart their nearest Interests, or their dearest Inclinations; to lay aside all Prejudice and Prepossession, either against Men's Persons, or their Doctrines, and to attend alone to what is said, and weigh its Reasonableness with Candour and Impartiality, according to the Truth, and its Conformity with Holy Scriptures. Men must not judge of either Prophets, or their Doctrines, by their own Affections or Desires: They must not do as *Ahab* did by *Micaiah*; *I know*, saith he, *there is one Micaiah, the Son of Imlah, by whom we may enquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.* The weak Prince had no regard to the Truth at all, but had rather be deceived, than not pleased; and hated him, because he prophesied unacceptable Things. Men must not look to be indulged in Things unlawful, and forbidden by God; or that his Message should not be delivered openly and plainly, tho' it would wound their Ears, and pierce their Hearts with many Sorrows. He ill becomes his Character,

Character, and little understands the Nature or the Dignity of his Calling, that will for Interest or Ambition, Fear or Favour, Love or Hate, dissemble in these Matters; and he is lamentably over-run with Fondness to himself, that would be for the present cheated into Peace and false Security, and knows it cannot last; but that his Dream will quickly end, and he shall wake in lasting and substantial Misery.

As it is the Prophet's Part to say with that *Micaiah*, (when he was tempted to delude the King with soft and pleasing Prophecies) *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak*; so is it to be the People's Part to answer, as the Children of *Israel* did to *Moses*, when he had been telling them all the Words and Judgments of the Lord, *All the Words which the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient*.

You are not to consider, whether what we say be acceptable to Flesh and Blood; whether the Doctrines we deliver, be consistent with your Profit, or your Pleasure; whether they cross your Interest, or your Inclination; nor any thing besides; but whether God hath spoken by us; whether the Things we say be so, or no, in Holy Scriptures; whether the Duties we exhort to, be so much your Interest and Concern to follow and perform, as we persuade; whether such Peace and Satisfaction here, and such eternal, excellent Rewards hereafter, are assigned and promised to your Faith, and your Obedience; and whether such amazing Punishments and Pains in Everlasting Fire are treasured up against the Day of Wrath and Retribution, for the ungodly, unbelievers, and Impenitent. And if you find these Things are so, you will make the Inference with *St. Peter*; *What manner of Persons ought you to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?* And see the great Necessity there is of complying with *St. James's* Advice,

vice, *To lay a-part all Filthiness, and Superfluity of Naughtiness, and receive with Meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls. To be Doers of the Word, and not Hearers only, deceiving your own selves.*

Secondly, If it was thus even with *Ezekiel*, and the other Messengers of God, with *Moses* and the Prophets, with *Christ* himself and his Disciples; if they had Reason to complain of their unkind Reception in the World, of the Hardness of People's Hearts and Unbelief, and of the little Fruit they found of all their Care and Labour in Performance of their Offices; if Men were deaf to all their Charms, charmed they never so wisely, warmly, and affectionately; there is less need that any now-a-days, the faint and feeble Imitators of their Zeal and Virtue, should complain of their hard Fortune upon these Occasions. It is, in Truth, a very great Discouragement in it self, to see such ardent Longings after People's Benefit, such zealous Prosecutions of it in such painful and industrious manner, prove so ineffectual as they oft-times do. But tho' it may be Matter of Complaint and Sorrow, yet it is none of Fear, or of Repentance, when they do their Duty: They have these great Examples set before them, as well for their Comfort, as their Imitation, that they should follow them in the careful and conscientious Discharge of their great Office, and leave with them the Issue in the Hands of God; well knowing, that whatever be the Event, they shall be judg'd with righteous Judgment, and shall receive a glorious Remembrance at God's Hand, for all their good Designs, and good Endeavours, altho' the Folly, or the Obstinacy of ungodly People, may have frustrated them both.

The Labours of the Prophets have a Threefold end,---- The First, and best, and most design'd by God,

God, is, The effecting his good Purposes in bringing People to Repentance and Salvation. The Second is, The discharging of their Duties, and the exemplifying their Obedience in the several Instances of his Commands, and the saving of their own Souls. The Third and last, and the most lamentable one, is, The justifying God in his Judgments, and vindicating him in his Inflictions; that all Pretence of Ignorance, and Inability, and Forgetfulness, may be destroy'd by their Instructions, Admonitions, and Reproofs, and by their frequently repeated Cries and Calls, both in and out of Season, to Repentance, that Men may carry Condemnation in their Bosoms to the Day of Doom, and acquit their Judge before the World of Men and Angels. *That they (as St. Austin somewhere says, with which I will conclude) who will not glorify God's Mercy in the Amendment of their Lives here, may glorify his Justice in their Punishment hereafter.*



S E R M O N III.

OF THE
Education of CHILDREN,
Preach'd before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD-MAYOR
AND
Court of Aldermen,
AT
GUILD-HALL Chapel.
On SUNDAY, *Novemb. 1. 1696.*





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TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF THE
UNITED PARISHES
OF
St. Austin and St. Faith.

HAVING frequently intended with my self, something of this Nature for your particular Use and Service, to whom, you know, I am more immediately related; it was the easier to me, to comply with their Desires who were willing to have this Discourse publish'd; because I knew I should thereby satisfy in part my own Intentions and Design of doing you good in this Instance; and therefore tho' it be now Common, yet I desire you earnestly to make it more particularly Yours, by a close Application of it to your selves.

I can't tell how a Minister can promise himself any Success in his Endeavours, if the Parents will not believe themselves obliged (as certainly they are by
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God's Commands) to educate their Children well, and bring them up in the Fear and Nurture of the Lord; and by their Care at home in private, fit them for those farther Instructions they are to receive in publick, at the appointed Opportunities. They are to sow the Seeds of Christ's Religion in the Children's Minds, and He must wisely cultivate, improve, and nourish them; They are to lay the first Foundations in their Hearts, and He must build thereon, as God enables him.

That this might not be a Work of Difficulty, either to Parents or to Children, nor either of them left at an Uncertainty, the one of Teaching, and the other of Learning what they ought, the Church, in her great Wisdom; hath collected in her Catechism a short, but full and comprehensive Summary of whatsoever a Christian is to believe and practise to his Soul's Health, which all her Children are to learn, remember, and consider, according to their Age and Understanding. This is delivered in so clear a Method, in Words and Sense so easy and intelligible, that it is not above a very mean Capacity; and yet the Matter is so solid and substantial, that it is fit for the strongest Understanding; the oldest Christian in the World need know no more, than what he is to learn there in his Youth, tho' he will know it better and more fully, the longer he considers it; so that the Parent, whilst he is instructing the Children in it, will be himself a gainful Learner; more and more edify'd, and grow continually in the Knowledge of his Faith and Duty.

The Neglect of this prescrib'd Course, has been one great Occasion, I believe, of that wide Difference there appears of private People's Judgments and Opinions in Matters of Religion; they have taken in different Principles in their Youth, and therefore as their Age advanc'd, have drawn different

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rent Conclusions from them, the Effects of which have been exceedingly mischievous. I do therefore advise and desire you all to teach your Children this judicious, sound, and truly Christian Catechism, that savours nothing of a Party or private Spirit, but is what they may, and must depend upon to their Lives-end.

When this good Ground-work is well laid, you may with much more Ease form and fashion them to Virtue and Religion, by putting them in mind of the Covenant they have made with God in Baptism, by which they stand oblig'd to give themselves entirely up to Christ; to look upon him as their only Lord and Lawgiver, their Saviour and their Judge; to believe whatever he reveals, and to fulfill whatever he commands. There also you will find the two Tables that contain their Duty towards God, and towards their Neighbour, and both of them explained with the clearest Brevity that can be found; from whence you are to take occasion of exciting them to a most diligent Performance of them; as also to rebuke and punish the Neglect, or the Transgression of them. There also they will learn the Lord's-Prayer, the Prayer that Christ himself, the Son of God, (who knew the Father's Will, and Man's Necessities, the best of all Men living) taught his Followers to use; and therefore it is such, you may be sure, as is best fitted for our Purpose, and such as is, both for the Matter and the Manner, acceptable to God the Father. After this follows a short, but full Account of the Two Sacraments, of Baptism, and the Lord's-Supper; by which they learn the Manner how they themselves (and all true Christians ever since our Saviour's Institution of it) were initiated into Christ's Religion, namely, by being baptiz'd in Water, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to Christ's Command, explain'd by the Universal Practice of the Church; insomuch that they

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who have at any time denied or refused the Matter and the Form of this Sacrament, have not been accounted Christians. Here they see also what is signify'd by being thus baptiz'd in Water, namely, the dying unto Sin, and living a-new to Righteousness, i. e. the repenting of, and forsaking all their past Sins, and living for the time to come, a Righteous and a Holy Life; which is also the Meaning of becoming a New Man, a New Creature, a Regenerate Person, and the like; all which is engag'd for by every one at his Baptism, and is to be remembred and perform'd for ever after. Here, lastly, they will come to see the End of the Institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's-Supper, the Cause and Purpose of its being ordained, namely, For the continual Remembrance of the Sacrifice of the Death of Christ, and of the Benefits which we receive thereby, i. e. to put them constantly in Mind, that Christ the Lord was crucify'd upon the Cross; that this his Death was an atoning, expiatory Sacrifice, and accepted by God as such; that for its Sake and Merit his Anger is appeas'd, he is now reconcileable to all that will repent them of their Sins, and forsake them, and obey the Gospel; he will forgive them the Penalty they had incurr'd, and will moreover crown them in the World to come with Everlasting Happiness. The Remembrance of this salutary Death and Sacrifice, and the great Benefits deriv'd to us from and by it, is the End of this Sacrament's being instituted by Christ: And therefore to answer the End of this Institution, they must come to the Sacrament; and when they come, the Bread broken is to remind them of the Body of Christ, torn and suffering on the Cross, and the Wine poured out is to remind them of the Blood of Christ that was there shed; and then they are to call to mind the inexpressible Benefits of this Death, the Pardon and Forgiveness of all the Sins which they repent of and forsake; the Hope and
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good Assurance of which Pardon, and Peace, and God's Favour, is as much the Life, the Strength and Comfort of the Soul, as Bread and Wine are the Support and Comfort of the Body.

Upon this Knowledge of the End of the Institution, and of the Benefits that we receive by Christ's Death, it remains only that the young ones be acquainted with the Preparation that is necessary to their coming to the Lord's-Supper, which they will find in the Answer to the last Question of the Catechism, which contains the whole of what they are to do. They are to examine themselves, whether they repent them truly of their former Sins; whether they stedfastly purpose to lead a new and better Life for the Time to come--- whether they have a lively Faith in God's Mercy, thro' Christ, i. e. Whether they verily believe that God was so exceeding merciful and gracious to Mankind, that for the Sake of Christ's Obedience, Death and Sufferings, he will certainly forgive the Sins of such as shall repent and leave them; and whether in full Perswasion of this Mercy and these gracious Promises, they set about Repentance: Whether they thankfully remember Christ's Death, i. e. Whether upon the Consideration and Remembrance of the mighty and amazing Miseries to which their Sins exposed them, and from which the Death of Christ alone has freed them, they do not call to mind this great Deliverance with the greatest Joy and Thankfulness, and bless and magnify the Name of God, who hath wrought this wonderful Redemption for them by the Death of Christ, his dear and only begotten Son. And, Lastly, whether they are in Charity with all Men.

This is the Preparation (and all the Preparation) that is necessary to the coming to the Lord's-Supper. And if People would be content to learn wherein this Duty consists, in the shortest, plainest, and the surest Method, they would go no farther than the Church-

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Catechism; or if a little farther, it should be but to the Communion-Service; in which they will be sure to find all that is needful or convenient for them to know or do before, and at, and after this Holy Sacrament.

I have neither Authority nor Intention to discommend or disallow the Use of other Books that treat of these Matters; but you will take it on my Word, I hope, that the shortest and the plainest Rules of Direction are still the best; that wherein soever other Books differ from this, they are not to be depended on; and that Multiplicity of Books is apt to beget Confusion. As far therefore as you will let my Judgment weigh with you, I recommend it to your Care, that you let the Church-Catechism be the Ground and Foundation of what your Children are to know of the Christian Religion; and that other good Books be call'd in as Helps to their Devotion only, or to explain the Particulars contain'd therein, if they be difficult.

Whilst you are teaching, and your Children learning all these Things, you must be sure, of all Things in the World, to go before them with a good Example; that is, to recommend, impress, and make your Lessons credible: They will understand, believe, and practise better, if they see you live as you teach them to live. Let them know that you pray to God constantly with your Family; that you love and exercise Truth, and Honesty, and Justice, in all your Dealings; let them hear and see you chide your Servants and Dependants for every Lye they tell, and every Fraud and Falshood they are guilty of; let them never hear you swear or curse, or speak any Thing disrespectfully of God, or Providence, or Holy Scriptures, or any thing of Religion; and they will then believe you are in earnest, and be more careful of doing as you bid them, and more fearful of offending. Let them see you go your self to Church upon the Lord's-Day, and as many of
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the Family as can be spar'd with your Convenience, and there behave themselves as becomes the Servants of God in his own House, and more immediate Presence; and let them never see, even in the After-part of that good Day, anything light, extravagant, or rude; but something of Respect and Honour shewn to the good Exercises that are over, and to the Day devoted by the Church of Christ to God's Service. Away with that severe, sullen, morose Religion, with which some Judaizing and mistaken Christians pass that Day on one hand; and that prophane, contemptuous, Court-like Observation of it on the other; but let a decent, Christian, and good-natur'd Carriage, temper these Extreams; that your Children may neither dread the Approach of Sunday above other Days, nor yet long for it, as a Day of Sloth and Idleness.

I hope I may, without Offence, take this Occasion to desire such of the Separation as are within my Parish, to take all the Care they can, that both their Children and their Servants go along with them to the Places where they serve God themselves, or to some other certainly; and require an Account of their so doing, that the Liberty of absenting themselves from their Parish-Churches, indulg'd to them by Man's Law, be not turn'd to the Libertinism of serving God no where, and Irreligion and Prophaneness find those People whom the Church loses. We must, indeed, on all sides, be solicitous lest he who sows Division amongst us, reap the Fruits thereof, and be the greatest Gainer; of this, in earnest, there was never greater need than now; for Christianity and good Morality had never more, or greater Enemies; and therefore all our joynt Endeavours will be little enough to oppose the soft Insinuations of their secret Underminers, and the most impudent and bold Attacks of their avowed and open Adversaries. I am sorry we can date the mighty Growth and Progress of these Mischiefs within the

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Compass of so few Years, when we were hoping still for better Things : But let this evil State provoke us to a greater Care and Zeal in the Defence of Virtue and Religion for the future.

You must all of you help to make this ugly Digression pertinent and useful, by taking all imaginable Care to breed up a Generation better than the present, and such as may do these wicked Days all the Disgrace and Shame they can, by a most firm Adherence to the Christian Faith, by a lively Sense of Virtue and Religion in the Soul, made manifest by a most virtuous and religious outward Practice.

I have done, you see, an unusual Thing in fixing a Preface to a Sermon; but it was to make the Sermon more yours than any one's else; and if the Sermon be better read for the sake of the Preface, or if the Preface gains its End without the Sermon, I shall obtain the Point I aim at, and will answer for the Absurdity or Newness of the Method. You know I am every way your Debtor in Religious Matters, and I assure you I am otherwise,

Your Affectionate,

Humble Servant,

W. FLEETWOOD.

PROVERBS XIII. 24.

*He that spareth the Rod, hateth his Son: but
he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.*

THE Education of Children is, and hath always been accounted, a Thing of such Importance, that all who have at any time discoursed or written of Government, have found themselves obliged to dwell particularly on that Subject. *Aristotle* thinks it a Matter of such Moment, that he positively determines it ought not to be left to the Parent's Choice; but that the Publick (whose especially the Children are) should be entrusted only with that Charge. And *Plato* lays down such severe Rules, that 'tis a question whether they were ever practicable, or only fitted to his fancied *Commonwealth*. And, indeed, considering that they are the Seed of Empires, Kingdoms, Corporations, and Families, and that the Good and Welfare of them all, depends entirely on them, there can't be too much Care employ'd about their bringing up. There are so many Hazards from the sensible and tender Dispositions of these nice Plants, from noxious Airs, inclement Seasons, and their own natural Luxuriancy, that it requires a great deal of Skill to cultivate them as they should, and as they well deserve. And it is with this Prospect, (and a larger one besides, the World to come) that the Spirit of God hath inserted so many positive Commands, and so many wise Rules

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Rules of training Children up, into the Holy Scriptures : For tho' *One* were enough, when found there, to make it our Duty, yet there are *Many* to enforce it farther ; and tho' the Spirit of God inspir'd alike the Herdsman's Son, with *Solomon* the King's, and made them alike infallible in what they should deliver to the World ; yet in Compliance (may be) with our Weakness, and the fond Conceits we have of human Reason and Understanding, it is so contriv'd, that there are more Precepts concerning Children's Education found in *Solomon* alone, than all the Scriptures else ; that they who take no Notice of the Inspiration, might yet be moved by the Authority of the greatest Wisdom, and the best Experience, and the Thing however done. I am to confine my self to that of my Text, which is as comprehensive as any ; and will,

First, Explain the Terms of it ; And,

Secondly, Shew the Truth of the Propositions contain'd therein ; And,

Lastly, Make what Application may be seasonable and useful.

And, *First*, of the Terms. *To spare the Rod*, in the first Clause, being oppos'd to *chastening* in the second ; by the *Rod* must needs be meant, not only that particular Instrument of Punishment, but every thing besides that may prove the Means of our Correction and Amendment. And so in *Job xxxiii. 19.* *He is chastened with Pain upon his Bed.* And so in *Psal. lxi. 10.* *I wept, and chastened my Soul with Fasting.* And so in *Isa. liii. 5.* *The Chastisement of our Peace was on him ;* by which is meant the Miseries, Afflictions, Pains, and Torments that our Lord endured

endured both in Life and Death for our sakes; and so in a great many other Places: So that by *Chastisement* is here intended every Instrument of Correction, every Means of effecting what we intend by chastising. And *to spare the Rod*, is, not to use those Means, not to employ those Instruments for the correcting and amending what we see amiss in Children, which are proper for their Age, suited to their Dispositions, and proportion'd to their Faults; whether it be Reproof and sharp Admonition, Restraint of Liberty, Disappointment of their Wills, or corporal Punishment: To do (in a word) whatever is necessary, convenient, or becoming the Children and the Parents in their respective Circumstances, is *to chasten*; and to neglect the doing it, is *to spare the Rod*. Let us see, in the next place, what is to love and hate one's Son, which are the rest of the Terms.

By *loving* and by *hating*, is not here meant the exerting actually those Passions in the Heart, for then the Text would be untrue: It is by no means likely, that an indulgent Parent sparing of his Child, should actually hate it in his Heart; or that the punishing it, should be the Effect or Sign of natural Love; for the contrary to this is mostly true: The sparing of it is the Fruits of natural Fondness and Affection, and the correcting it is not the Choice of the Heart, but the Effects of a Necessity, impos'd by Prudence and Consideration, and Hopes and Fears of what may come to pass. By *loving* and by *hating* therefore is to be understood, the acting agreeably to the *Reason*, and not the *Blindness* of those Passions; the producing such Effects as are in God's Account, and wise Men's too, and in our own, when freed from partial Prejudices, the Consequence and Fruits of Love and Hatred acting regularly; such as are commonly esteemed the Effects of those two Causes, whether they indeed proceed from them or no: So

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that

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that to love and hate one's Children, is to behave one's self so towards them, that they and others may be convinc'd we love or hate them, by such Fruits as reasonably and ordinarily are the Products of those two Passions, whether those Passions actually possess the Heart or no, of which we can convince none but our selves.

From the Terms thus explain'd, it will not be difficult to shew, in the *second Place*, the Truth of the Two Propositions, how and in what Sense he may be said to *hate* his Son, that spares the Chastisement of him; and how he *loves* him who chastiseth him betimes: For if we are to reckon of Love and Hatred by the Effects, then it is easy to discern when Parents hate their Children, namely, when either thro' Neglect or Fondness, they permit them to enter on at first, or afterwards continue in such Courses, as will bring them to inevitable Ruin; when by their want of Care, Instruction, or Correction, those Children fall into such Miseries, as the utmost Hatred of their most profess'd inveterate Enemies, could neither wish nor make them greater; whatever Love there may at the bottom. What signifies the crowning of a Victim with a Garland, when it is still dress'd up to Death? That Mother is as much a Murtheress who stifles her Child in a Bed of Roses, as she that does it with a Pillow-bear. The End and Mischief is as great, tho' the Means and Instrument be not the same: And where two Causes will produce the same Effect, with equal Certainty, 'tis no great Matter which of them it is, nor whether you give it a hard or gentle Name. It is all one as if a Parent truly hated his Child, if thro' his Default, he fall into those Evils which will naturally work his Mischief or Undoing; that Fault has the same Effect that downright Hatred would have had. And then for the *Will*, tho' he can't be said to *will* downright

right the Evil of his Children, yet if he will the Means which have a natural Tendency to produce that End, he is understood, in the Accounts of Reason, to will the End, and to be guilty of the Evil in a great Degree. And so we are said to will a great many Things in Scripture, not that we will them properly, but that we do those Things, from whence the others naturally and necessarily follow. So God expostulates, in *Ezek. xviii. 31.* and *xxxiii. 11.* *Why will ye die, O House of Israel!* Not that the *Israelites* will'd or desir'd to die, for that's a Thing incredible, if not impossible, in the hardest Sense of that Word; but that they willed such Things, as would unavoidably bring that Death, and most inevitably ruin them. So in *Psal. cvi. 24.* *Yea, they despised that pleasant Land.* Not that they despised or rejected the Land of *Canaan* it self; but rejecting the only Means God had appointed to bring them thither, which were Faith and Trust in him, and Patience and Obedience to his Laws, they are said to despise the Land it self. So in *Prov. xvii. 19.* *He that exalteth his Gate, seeketh Destruction, i. e.* He that liveth above his Fortune and Condition, or that openeth wide the Flood-Gates to Iniquity, seeketh Destruction; the Meaning is, that such a one shall *find* Destruction, he is as one that *seeks* and makes Enquiry after it, and he shall surely find it: So that Men are not charged with the Mischiefs only they intend directly, but with such also as are like to follow, whether they intend them or not; nay, tho' they should intend the contrary. He who takes the natural and ready Means to any End, is strongly guilty of the evil Consequence, altho' he should not only *not* design that End and Consequence, but hope and wish it might not come to pass; because neither Hopes, nor Wishes, nor Designs, can hinder natural or moral Causes from producing natural and moral Effects.

But

But neither is it only so in acting, but in permitting also ; he is said, upon the same Account and Reason, to be guilty of the Evils that ensue, whose Duty it was, and in whose Power it was to have prevented them, but did not : It were cruel and unjust, to charge a Man with all the Evils he should by Duty prevent, but could not for want of Power ; and it is not always reasonable, to charge a Man with the Evils he could by his Power have prevented, but did not, because he was not oblig'd in Duty ; because the Signification of Power, in such a Case, is to be determined by the Convenience of Time, and Place, and Person, and a great many other Circumstances, of which a Man is only able to judge himself : But where Power and Duty meet together, there the Obligation is unquestionable, and the Neglect of doing what we should and could, is inexcusable. The Application of these Rules to the Case in hand, is, I think, as evident as the Reason of those Rules. It is plain from the Light of Nature, and the use of Reason, as well as God's Determination in Scripture, that a Parent is oblig'd to educate his Children in the best and most religious Manner possible, to instruct them in all that's good, and warn them of all that's Evil ; and it is as plain from the Corruption of our Nature, the Perverseness of our Wills, and from lamentable Experience, that unless this Care be taken, Children will unavoidably be ruin'd ; and therefore he who neglects this Education, which he might, and should look after, is properly enough said to undo his Children ; and as he who should designedly ruin his own Children, would deservedly be said to hate them, so may he also who neglects their Education, if such Neglect be the natural and ready Way to Ruin, tho' he don't design that Ruin ; and tho' that Neglect do not proceed from Hatred, yet he is said, and properly enough, both to undo and hate them.

Now

Now the Evils that proceed from a careless, or from bad Education, from want of good Instruction, of Reproof, Restraint, or of due Chastisement in any kind, are infinite and pernicious, they are numberless, and they are intolerable. I believe it were hard to reckon up any considerable Calamity that has befallen a Kingdom, City, Family, or private Person, but might be justly charg'd upon this Head in some Measure.

The Reasoning of *Plato* is both just and excellent upon the Education of *Cyrus* and his Son *Cambyfes*, *Darius* and his Son *Xerxes*, and the following Kings of *Persia*; and shews the exact and perfect Correspondence betwixt the Ways of bringing up those Princes, and the Quality and Fortune of their Government and Kingdoms whilst they liv'd.

Cyrus having been brought up still in painful and laborious Exercises, and in a handsome kind of Equality of almost all Things betwixt himself and his Companions, his Reign was full of Glory and Success, and every Thing that's Good and Laudable. But whilst himself was reaping Palms and Crowns of Victory, he left the Education of his Son to the Ladies, who brought him up in the luxurious Softness of the *Medes*, where no body durst speak a Word of Truth or Honesty, for fear of wounding his Ears, which were us'd to nothing but to Compliment and Flattery. And hence it came, that the Reign and Government of this soft Prince was full as infamous and unfortunate both to himself and People, as that of his brave Father had been glorious, wise, and happy unto both. *Darius Hystaspes* afterwards ascended the Throne, and as his Education had not been in the Delights of a Court, but hard and rough, in Labours and Fatigues; so his Reign resembled, in a manner, that of *Cyrus*, both for Glory and for Conquest: But whilst he and his Compeers were spreading

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ing every where the *Persian* Honour by their Gallantry and brave Atchievements, *Xerxes* his Son was left in Women's Hands, and from them had just such another Education as *Cambyfes* had ; and reigned accordingly, leaving where'er he came, the shameful Marks of a prodigious Power, put into the Hands of an ambitious Madman.

Darius was, indeed, a great deal more to blame than *Cyrus*, because he avail'd not himself of so notorious an Example of Miscarriage, nor procur'd a better Education for his Son ; but that's not the only Use that we may make of these great Instances ; one cannot chuse but see, and lament too, that the Fate and Fortune of great Empires, the Welfare and Ruin of so many Hundred Thousands, should depend upon the Care and the Neglect of a Parent, upon the Improvement, or the Sottishness of one Body : But this would not touch us so near, we think, if it were not also true in lesser Matters, and as fatal to private Families. The good or evil Education of Children, does not only affect themselves, but all the Stock and Kindred, more or less ; there is hardly any body so inconsiderable, but somebody may be better'd, and somebody prejudic'd by him ; there is no body stands so single and remote, but if he falls, there is some one hurt besides himself, directly or indirectly ; which, as it is a Motive to induce every Relation to see after the Improvement of Children, as it falls in their way ; so it is a special Argument to Parents, to attend more heedfully to the well educating of their Children, because the Welfare and the Prejudice of so many other People does, in a great Measure, depend thereon. But supposing the Evil were single, that neither Commonwealth, nor Family, nor Parent, were endamag'd (as they all are) by want of Education ; yet the Evils that befall the Children are so intolerably many.

many, and pernicious both to Soul and Body, that those may well be said to *hate them*, that do not, when they might and should, prevent them.

Can we see a Man that has wholly renounced Truth and good Faith, so entirely possess'd with the Spirit of Falshood, Lying and Deceit, that one knows not how to believe a Word he says, nor how to trust him with the least Concern? Can we see a Man so ignorant of God and Goodness, of Religion and his Duty, and of all Things Spiritual, that one would think he were newly born into the World, and had not yet attained the Use of Reason, nor, indeed, the Use of Speech and Language; and another so exceeding skilful in those Matters, and of so sharp a Wit and penetrating Judgment, that he knows very well, that there is no such Thing as God and Soul, or any thing but gross, substantial Matter, modify'd with great Variety? Can we hear another talk so loudly, and so frequently of God, that his Mouth is fill'd with nothing else; and yet at last, it should be all in his Dishonour and Defiance, in wounding Oaths, in raging Blasphemies, and dreadful Imprecations, without Temptation, without Pleasure, without Profit; and at last, without his Knowledge and Design? Can we see another, vers'd in all the Species of Intemperance, practis'd in all the Arts of Luxury and Wantonness, and devoted wholly to Excess, a perfect Slave to his voracious Appetite, and whose Heart and Soul is in his Dish? Another so intoxicated with the Love of Drink, that if 'twere possible to drown himself, he would; devoting both the Day and Night to that Excess, having no other Business, nor other Pleasure and Diversion than Intemperance, neglecting all Concerns, forgetting all his Duty both to God and Man; a Reproach to Nature, Scandal to Religion, Useless to all the Ends and Purposes of Living; and not

only so, but by his bad Example, and the cursed Consequences of those Courses, ruinous to himself and Family, and a most pernicious Creature to the Commonwealth. And another so enfeebled by his Lusts, so debilitated both in Soul and Body, by his exorbitant Indulgence to those brutal Longings, that he is scarce the Shadow of a Man; dull of Apprehension, weak in Imagination, failing in Memory, and moap'd in his Understanding. In a word, as impotent of Mind as Body, and whose Soul is as loose about him as his Limbs.

Can one see, I say, these, and a Thousand other Evils and Disorders, with all their ugly Consequences, reign and rage about the World continually, and know at the same time, they are the natural Consequences of a loose and careless Education; and might, in a great measure, have been prevented by Advice, Restraint, and punishing betimes; can one see and know this, and doubt at the same time, whether our Parents hated us or no, who should and could, but would not save us from them? What could our greatest Enemy have done besides? He would have taken the same Courses: For One that he exercises as he did *Job*, with Sorrows and Afflictions, he ruins a Thousand by Indulgences; it is the End he aims at, which is our Destruction, and 'tis no matter by what Means he comes about it. If *Eutrapelus's* Presents are sure to prove as fatal to a weak Mind, as a Dagger in a Man's Heart, or a Glass of Poison in his Bowels, what signify the Shews of Love, and the Pretence of Friendship, which prove as deadly as the Assaults of open Enmity? What signifies it, that the Child is the Delight of its Parents Eyes, and the Idol of their Hearts; the perpetual Object of their Thoughts, and the perpetual Theme of their Discourse; that they discern new Beauties daily in it, secret Charms, and Excellencies

cies undiscoverable to all the World besides; hear Musick in his Voice, and Wit in every Word, and Grace and Comeliness in every Action? If Care be not taken to render him as excellent indeed and to himself, and as amiable to others, by Virtue, Goodness, Sweetness and Humanity, as he is to them by an abused Fancy; all other Demonstrations are but Demonstrations of their own Fondness to, and Love of their own self, and end in their own Complacency and Delight. If you would convince another of your Love, it is *he* that must feel the Effects of it in and upon himself, as well as you. It is otherwise, like the Charity of good Words, the wishing of Alms, and Food, and Raiment, with which a Man may be starv'd with Cold and Hunger. The Love that terminates in Fondness, and the little trifling (if no worse) Effects of that, can no more properly be call'd the Love of one's Children, than the bidding the Hungry be filled, the Thirsty be satisfy'd, and the Naked be cloath'd, without supplying those Necessities, can be call'd *relieving them*. But the Parallel will hold no farther; for he that relieves not the distressed, does them at least no Harm or Injury; whereas the Parent, that with all this Dotage, takes not care to educate his Children virtuously and well, does them the greatest Injury and Mischief in the World; mispends the only proper Time and Season of their Improvement, deprives them of all the Advantages and Opportunities of becoming useful to the Publick, a Support to the Family, a comfortable Relation, and happy People themselves; and not only so, but exposes them defenceless, destitute and naked to abundance of Hazards and Temptations; to a contagious Air in the most sensible and tender Age; to a vicious World, with vicious Inclinations; to combat with those Foes, with whom our Hearts do naturally conspire;

to meet those Dangers we rejoyce to run into ; to vanquish those Temptations which we seek and hunt for ; to resist those Evils we had rather should prevail than be subdu'd : To be left, in a word, to our selves, to the Naughtiness of our own Hearts, and the Dictates of unruly, heedless Nature, to engage with so many Sins, and so many Snares, as are commonly a Match sufficient for the greatest Care, and greatest Watchfulness, and greatest Prudence, together with the ordinary Supplies of God's Grace, is to be ruin'd and undone without peradventure. And if these are not true Effects of Hatred, if these are not the Tokens of the greatest Ill-will, and the most improv'd, refin'd Malice, we are yet to learn what those Words mean. And this, I hope, is so evident from the Sense of the Thing, from the Reason of the Words, and from the Experience of the World, that there is little occasion to press you with the Authority of the Text, and to insist upon it, that 'tis King *Solomon*, inspir'd by God, that says, *That he that spareth the Rod, hateth his Son.* It will be somewhat clearer, by considering the other Clause in the Text, and seeing what are the Effects of Love, which is early Chastisement. *He that loveth his Son, chasteneth him betimes.*

I have already made appear, that Love and Hatred, in these Cases, can only be securely judg'd of by the Effects ; not by the Feelings, Motions, and Affections of the Parents Hearts, but by the Fruits and Consequences, of which the Children must be sensible themselves, and all the World be Judges. For the Ground of all this Mischief is, that Parents commonly consult with nobody but themselves, to know if they love their Children ; and finding quickly by the Reply their Hearts make, that they love them as they love their Eyes, they rest contented with the Answer, and use them indeed as tenderly ; whereas they should en-

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quire of Strangers, and of wise Men, impartial and unprejudic'd; they should take their Informations from Reason and good Sense, from the Experience of the Aged, and such as study'd more particularly this Affair; and they would shew them by the Effects alone, whether they lov'd or no; the Marks and Tokens of Affection would be visible in Manners and Instruction, beyond the Power of being deceiv'd; and if this be too much, let them learn the Truth, from the Pity of some, and from the Reproach of others, and from the common Rumours of the Neighbourhood. Every body but themselves, will tell them, that Love of Children must appear by its Effects and Fruits; and no other Thing can possibly convince another of that Love, tho' they themselves are never so perswaded that they do; and to confirm it, could be content to die. But of this, enough already, and also what it is to *chasten*; It remains, that I say a word or two of the proper Season, and that is *betimes*; *He that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes*; either betimes with respect to his Age, or with respect to his Faults.

First, with respect to his Age. It is, in every Thing, of great Importance how we begin, what Grounds we lay, and what Foundation 'tis we build upon: If this be not right, the rest is but Time and Pains mis-spent, and will end in Loss and Disappointment. It is as a Man that sets out false; every Step that he proceeds, is so much out of his way, and he must return, and begin again. And so it is with the Journeyings of Life; if in our early Youth we set out false, fall into evil Practices, or be corrupted with pernicious Maxims, it is either a great Chance that we never see our Error at all, but blindly still proceed at all adventure; or if we do, we find our selves constrain'd to begin a-new, to return to the Place from whence we first set out, to our

intolerable Trouble and Vexation. What a deal of human Life is spent, not in weaving a new Web, but in unravelling the old ; not in learning new Lessons of Truth and Virtue, but in unlearning those of Vice and Falshood ; in forgetting of evil Principles, and laying down old Prejudices ; in stripping ourselves of our accustom'd Habits, in parting with our old Acquaintances, in forsaking our old Friends, and in a manner tearing out our Vitals, and rending of our Hearts afunder ? All which might, in great measure, be prevented, by an early Seasoning in the ways of Goodness. It was in prospect of this, that one of the Ancients would have Children accustom'd to love and praise with Delight all virtuous Actions, and detest all Vices, even before they attain'd the Use of Reason ; he would have them constantly observe them, know them compleatly, and form in their Minds perfect Ideas of them ; and observing that Children are first of all affected with the Sense of Pleasure and of Pain, he would have them used, tho' never so little and young, to take or think there is no Pleasure but in Goodness, Virtue, Temperance, Justice, and the like ; nor feel or think there is any great Pain but in those Things that are truly evil, Vice and Sin. The Thing is carried certainly too high, and the Lesson too refin'd and subtile to be put in Practice ; but the Thing he means is this, That the Preventions and Prepossessions of Virtue, Goodness, and Religion, should answer at least the Prejudices of our natural Corruption, and that Propensity and Inclination to Folly and to Sin, we bring along with us into this World ; that the Artificial Principles of Education, might be of equal poise with our original Corruption, till the use of our Understanding bear down the Scale on the right Side ; and if it be better to prevent, than cure an Evil, to save from Danger, than deliver out of it ; then it is better

to begin *betimes* with chastening of our Children, to make them wise at *our* Expence, to let them know no Sin but by Description ; to hinder them from making an Experiment so very unprofitable at best, and fatal in the Event most commonly.

But, *Secondly*, *betimes* is also to be understood with respect to the Fault ; the first respecting Age, would, if 'twere possible, prevent the Evil ; this latter is to put a speedy Stop to it, to hinder it from growing any farther ; the first Advice is, to take all Care imaginable, that no corrupt or noxious Weeds should spring up in that pure and tender Soil ; the second is to root them out *betimes*, if once they come : So that to *chasten betimes*, is to see, that Punishment do constantly attend the Crime, before it be forgotten, and before an evil Habit be contracted by the frequent Repetition of evil Acts.

First, Before it be forgotten ; as well that it may not appear to proceed from a Delight in Punishment, or to be the Effects of study'd and deliberate Cruelty ; as also, that the Fault being fresh in Memory, the Justice and Reasonableness of the Infliction may the better appear, and make the deeper Impression on the Mind, and raise the greater Aversion and Abhorrence of the Thing ; that *Impunity* may not breed *Security* in Sin ; and that Children may not argue as older People often do, that *because Sentence is not speedily executed against an evil Work, therefore their Hearts should be fully set in them to do Evil*. 'Tis a false and vicious Way of arguing ; but because 'tis obvious, natural, and too too easy, it should be silenc'd quickly, and convicted of its Falshood, that it may not impose on them a second Time.

But, *Lastly*, and most especially, for fear of evil Habits being contracted ; the Dread of Punishment is the most natural Restraint upon the Mind, 'tis the

most powerful Motive to Obedience, the very Life of all Laws, and without which, they would be but a dead Letter. And all the Reason in the World they should be so; for who would obey against his Interest, or who would practise against his Inclination, without Fear? And who would fear without Punishment? According therefore to the Degrees of Impunity which Men can find or fancy, will their Obedience to the Laws, or Disobedience prove. And so it is, even in the smallest Matters that relate to Children; they naturally incline the wrong Way, and are kept strait by forcible Coercion; the Dread of Punishment is the Restraint that lies most powerfully upon them, 'tis the Consideration of that, that is their Motive to Obedience, and the Discouragement that keeps them from offending; and he that removes that Bar, lays them expos'd and open to every Danger and Temptation. But nothing does this more effectually, than suffering them to sin at first without Reproof and Punishment; this strangely lessens the Guilt and Horror of their Faults within their own Minds, gives them Degrees of Confidence in Wickedness, and makes them think it no such heinous Matter, and venture on it frequently and freely, till it at last becomes habitual, and is rooted firmly in them; and then the Danger is a thousand Times the greater, and the Pains of remedying all these Mischiefs infinitely more: So that allowing that they *must*, some time or other, root these Evils out, free them from the Bondage and Captivity of their Lusts and Passions, and rid them of all their bad and foolish Principles, and set them in the Ways of Virtue and Sobriety again; allowing, I say, that this must needs be done, that they cannot possibly be safe or happy without it; nay, that they must be miserable here, and more than so hereafter; allowing of all this, it is demonstrable, that it is not only

a Piece of the greatest *Wisdom* to set about it betimes, but of the greatest *Mercy* and Compassion in the World, even in the Judgment of the tenderest and most pitying Mother. 'Tis like putting *One* to Death, to save a Hundred by the Terror of the Example; which may be Justice to the Offender, but is, in Truth, a Kindness to the rest. If *one* Reproof and Admonition will prevent the Occasion of twenty more, each one as sharp and terrible, it would be Cruelty to spare it. If an early Restraint of undue Liberty, will prevent Licentiousness hereafter, which must be restrain'd with Chains and Dungeons, who would not think it a Mercy to be restrain'd betimes? It is better, sure, to break us of our Wills betimes, and to deny us our Satisfactions in small and trifling Things, before we can have set our Hearts upon them, than to let our Wills and Inclinations gather Strength, and our Affection settle and grow firm, and then begin to fall upon us; the one is only as the bending, the other as the breaking of an Arm. A little Pain and Trouble, and Uneasiness, will serve at first to set us right again; when a Continuance in our evil State, and a contracted Habit, will require a great deal of Patience, and put us to a great deal of Torment. A little Care, and a little Strength, will serve to keep a young and tender Graft in Uprightness and Order; which, if permitted to grow awry for some time, must suffer Violence and great Distortion, before it will be strait again. The older *we* grow in evil Practices and evil Maxims, the older *they* grow too, and take the faster hold, and root the deeper in us, and consequently are remov'd with greater Difficulty: So that allowing, that there is an absolute Necessity of their being removed at length, it is plain and manifest, beyond Denial, that it is not only better both for Parent and for Child, that it be done *betimes*, but that

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it is a Piece of Cruelty both in the one, and to the other, to defer it till the vicious Habit is contracted; and consequently that the Truth of the Proposition in the Text does visibly appear, *that he that loveth his Son, chasteneth him betimes.* And having done with that, I am now to make Application of what hath been said, and it shall be to the Parties here concern'd.

First, The Parent.

Secondly, The Children; and to both in short.

First, To the Parent. To shew you the Necessity there is of bringing up your Children under an early and severe Discipline, the Spirit calls the doing of it *Love*, which is a Term so fit and so expressive, that Nature seems to have appropriated it to Parents in such manner, that they are fond of the Name, even when they have not the Thing; they would be thought to love even when they don't; it looks so like their own, and what they should do; and the Neglect of this he calls *Hatred*, a Term from which all Parents naturally abhor. But that you might not be deceived, and make your Judgments from the Passions and Affections of your own Hearts, he describes this Love and Hate by such Effects as are not usually the Products of those Passions in the Hearts of Parents; but such as are so in God's Accounts, and wise Men's, and Children's themselves, when they grow up to Years of Understanding; and therefore that you should not set the Movings of your Hearts, and your own fond Opinions and Conceits of Kindness, against the Reason, Judgment, and Experience of the whole World, and oftentimes your own: But freeing your selves as much as may be from the Partialities of Nature, and your Parental Prejudices, deal with your own as freely and as wisely as you would with the Children of a Foreigner and Stranger, believing there is need of equal Care,
and

and equal Rigour in treating with your own, as you can visibly discern there is in treating with another's. This is the only true and lasting Kindness you can do them ; all other Tokens of your Love, but that of good Discipline, will die with you, or may be taken from them by sundry Chances and Misfortunes. This is the only Treasure and Possession you can leave them, of which they cannot be depriv'd by Thieves and Robbers ; out of the Power of Chance, and above the Reach and Malice of the subtlest and most formidable Enemy. This alone, without any other Accession, often proves the Foundation of a lasting Happiness ; but every thing besides, without this, signify at least nothing, but are most commonly the Instruments of greater Mischief, and the Occasions of greater Falling. And tho' it can't be done without Reluctancy, and some Uneasiness on both Parts, yet it must needs be done however ; it is but like removing Knives and Instruments of Danger out of their Way, for fear of hurting them, notwithstanding all their Cryings and Impatience after them ; or like the administering severe Physick, to prevent a growing Sickness, notwithstanding all their Loathings and Resistance : Your Fondness seldom hinders you from this, and yet severe and early Discipline is but an equal crossing of their Wills, an exercising of their Patience, and applying as uneasy Remedies to Evils much more dangerous, and to effect a Good much more considerable than that of Health it self. It is not easy to determine how far Children's Faults are chargeable upon their Parents ; there are too many, and too intricate Circumstances to be consider'd, before one can decisively pronounce on such Matters ; but neither of them are the safer for this Uncertainty and Doubt. The Children shall unquestionably suffer for their own Sins, and the Parents as unquestionably for their Neglect : They
have

have both of them Guilt enough, and both of them shall have enough of Punishment; the one for not having done what they should, the other for doing what they should not. Not that after all the Care, and Discipline, and early Chastisement, the Parent is secure of the Event, but secure of himself, and his Design: He has done his Duty, and must leave the Issue in the Hands of God; he has taken the natural, ready, reasonable, and usual and appointed Means; and if the Strength of Temptations, and the Violence of the Children's Passions, or the Perverseness of their Wills, obstruct and hinder these Means from attaining their good End, he has freed his Soul: The Parent may be after that, sad and unfortunate, but has remov'd his Guilt and Punishment; and, *next to the effecting what we would, is the Satisfaction of having done what one should.* And so much for Application to the Parent.

A word or two to the other Party, and I have done; and that, not to persuade you that Reproof, Restraint, and Punishment are Things eligible, or no such grievous and uneasy States as they are fancy'd; for they are undoubtedly uneasy States, and just as bad as you experience them to be; there is no arguing against Sense, or persuading against Feeling; but that you would believe, since they proceed from People of the greatest Love and Tenderness, and fore against their Inclinations, that they are the most natural and necessary Means of effecting the greatest Good, and preventing the greatest Evils in the World, and so designed by those that do inflict him. It is true what St. Paul observes in another Case, *Heb. xii. 11.* That *no Chastisement for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of Righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* You cannot love Cor-

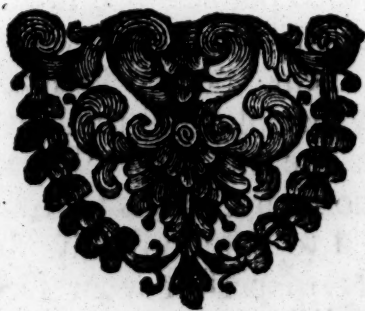
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reption and Restraint ; but when you shall hereafter see and feel the Effects of all this careful Discipline, in the Fear of God, in the Government of your Passions, in Temperance, in Chastity, in Patience under Evils, in bearing Disappointments, in the Joys of Innocence, and the Comforts of a good Conscience ; then you will bless your Parents and Instructors, who, by their Admonitions, seasonable Reproofs, and early Chastisements, delivered you from the Snares of Sin and Death, from the Plague of a guilty Mind, from an uneasy Remembrance of what is past, and a fearful looking-for of Evils to come, which you will then desire to have avoided, tho' with the utmost Pain and Torment, and curse the Indulgence that prevented it. You will have other Notions and Opinions of the Love of Parents and Instructors than you now have ; and therefore in the mean time, let the Reason, Wisdom, and Experience of all Ages convince you, that the Courses taken to make you good and happy, are not only fit and suited to your Age and Tempers, but necessary and unavoidable, tho' for the present they appear so grievous and unacceptable ; and therefore be not so hasty and impatient under them, nor covet so to be deliver'd from them ; be not so fond of immature Manhood, only because you think it is a State of Freedom from the Bondage of your Discipline. That Age has no such Charms in it as you imagine ; and when aspir'd to so ambitiously, and so unseasonably, 'tis only to perfect your Destruction, and compleat your Misery the sooner ; it is according to the good or ill Improvement of this your Season of Discipline, that Manhood shall prove more or less comfortable ; the Ground is now a cultivating, the Seed is now a sowing, that shall spring up to lasting Honour and Advantage, or to your lasting Shame and Ruin : And therefore tho' the Heats of

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Fancy,

Fancy, the Vigour of your springing Youth, and Fervour of Complexion, may suggest both strange and forward Things ; yet trust them not, nor listen to them ; it is but like the Gaiety that springs up from the Fumes of new Wine, that warm and delight Men for a Moment, but soon evaporate, and leave the Heart in greater Damps and Melancholy. You will quickly find the Mischiefs of forsaking Discipline, and all those gay Expectances will vanish and conclude in lamentable Disappointments ; but the Trouble is, that then Repentance comes too late, the Time is irrecoverable, and the Evil is irremediable. And therefore, to conclude, learn to be wise in this your Hour, the Wisdom at least of suffering others to be wise and careful for you, in Things of which you have as yet no Knowledge or Experience ; and yet so necessary to you, that thereupon depends the Welfare and Felicity of all your Lives.





S E R M O N I V.

PREACH'D AT

St. *P A U L*'s Cathedral,

J A N U A R Y 30. 169⁸.

BEFORE THE

R I G H T H O N O U R A B L E

T H E

L O R D - M A Y O R

A N D

Court of A L D E R M E N.

I S A M. XXVI. 10, 11.

David said furthermore, As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his Day shall come to die, or he shall descend into Battel, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine Hand against the Lord's Anointed.

R. **T**H O' one must needs be sensible, that Arguments and Inferences fetch'd from the *Jewish* Government, cannot by any means conclude with
 3 Certainty

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Certainty another Nation, and a different Constitution; and that the Scripture-Instances themselves, without some general positive Command to follow them, can oblige no farther than they carry Reason and Convenience along with them; yet because the World is govern'd mostly by Examples, and Scripture-Examples chiefly urg'd, and fittest for our Imitation; it may not be improper to consider in this History the Provocations *Saul* had given to *David*, and the Opportunities that *David* had to avenge himself, and take away his Life: This I will do in the *first place*; and in the *second*, consider the Reason *David* here assigns for his Proceedings; *It is the Lord's Anointed*: And in the *third* and *last place*, apply my self a little to the Occasion of this Day's Assembly.

I. The Persons here concern'd are *Saul* and *David*, the King of *Israel* and his Servant, the Father and the Son-in-law; and the State in which the Text shews us these Two, was that of *Enmity*; it was the second Time that *Saul*, with a premeditated form'd Design, had hunted after *David* to destroy him; and 'twas the second Time that God had put the former in the latter's Power, and given his Life into his Hands, which he was tender of the second Time, and spar'd it with his old and usual good Expression, *God forbid that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed*. A noble Instance this, if 'twere alone, of a most excellent forgiving Nature, of firm and solid Virtue, of steady and unshaken Loyalty; but when consider'd with its Circumstances that attended it, the Provocations *Saul* had given, and the Advantages that *David* had, it will appear an Act so brave and generous, that it would be flattering up our selves in vain, to hope to see it ever parallel'd throughout.

Consider

Consider therefore, *First*, The Prince that was his Captive now, and at his Mercy, had sometime since descended so below himself, as to become the Envier and Detractor from his Praise, was poorly jealous of the Honours he had purchased, and tried to blast the Lawrels he had gather'd, at the Expence of so much Painful Toil and Hazard; and 'tis no little Share of Grace and Goodness, that can restrain a young aspiring Hero from taking Vengeance on the Maligners of his Praise, and from removing all Impediments in his Pursuit of Fame and Glory.

Consider, *Secondly*, This was the Prince that had attempted twice to murder him himself, had thrown his Javelin twice to fix him to the Wall, and chose to make himself the Executioner of his own Choler and Revenge, hearkning ungratefully to the Suggestions of that *Evil Spirit*, which the good Youth was at the present labouring with his Musick to appease and charm; and when Men's Lives are so apparently sought after, they usually lay all Respects aside, and listen to the Dictates of unruly Nature.

Thirdly, He was a false perfidious Prince; under Pretence of honouring and advancing him, he had remov'd him from himself, and made him Captain over a Thousand; and still to make the Matter less suspicious, said unto him, *Behold my elder Daughter Merab; her will I give to thee for a Wife; only be valiant for me, and fight the Lord's Battles.* But what follows? For Saul said, *Let not mine Hand be on him, but let the Hand of the Philistines.* Nothing affects a generous Mind so sensibly, as being cheated under Shew of Friendship; and Treachery is never viler, than when 'tis covered with the Mask of Godliness.

But, after all, it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's Daughter, should have been given to

David, that she was given to *Adriel the Meholathite to Wife* ; an Affront in its own Nature very great undoubtedly ; but such as, according to the Maxims of our Modern Gallantry, were never to be pardon'd. But worser yet ; When *Michal's* voluntary Love had amply satisfy'd the Disappointment he had had in *Merab*, the unrighteous Father, harden'd in his Cruelty, would make his Daughter instrumental in the murdering of his Son-in-law, would have the Left Hand cut the Right one off, the Wife conspire against her Lord and Husband, and betray the Life she lov'd and priz'd above her own. And when a Man has thus apparently attempted to debauch the Loyalty, and break the Union of the Marriage-Bed, to dissolve those Sacred Bands, to interrupt the sweetest Commerce of Man's Life, and violate all the Ties of Nature, Reason, and Religion, by a Practice of such horrid and unnatural Wickedness, there is hardly any Excess of Fury so exorbitant, but seems at first excusable, in a thus injured and abused Husband. *But God forbid*, said *Dauid*, notwithstanding all this, *that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed*. The Villany of this Attempt, the Wickedness of *Saul*, and *David's* Virtue, might yet be rais'd, by considering what were the Effects of this his Rage and Disappointment ; he was so cruel, that he took the Princess from her Husband, broke off the Comfort of her Life, and sent her to a Stranger's loath'd, unhallow'd Bed ; and even when *Jonathan* himself, his noblest, best beloved Son, the Prop and Comfort of his Age, the Light and Joy of *Israel*, the Glory of his House, and the Support of his Kingdom, came but to intercede in his Friend's behalf, and to excuse his Absence, *Saul's* Anger was so enkindled at him, that he cast a Javelin at him, to have nail'd him to the Wall ; a Piece of Rage and brutal Violence that Nature

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wants a Name for, but a sure Indication that such a settled Wrath was never to be appeased, and therefore never to be ventured more ; and therefore now secur'd for ever.

But *farther*, he was Perjur'd, he had but lately taken a solemn Oath before the Lord and *Jonathan*, *David* should not be slain ; when behold, upon the first awakening of his evil Spirit, even whilst his Vows were warm upon his Lips, he threw himself the second Javelin at his Heart, and threw away all Faith and Honour with it. And when a Prince hath thus abandon'd common Honesty, broken the sacred Cords that knit Societies, and keep up Governments and mutual Correspondences together, with Relations Natural and Civil, and by his Perjuries provok'd the Vengeance of God, and is delivered into the Hands of those whose Innocence and good Credulity he had impos'd on, and abus'd almost to their Destruction ; Oh ! what a mighty Measure of God's Grace must fill the Heart of him, that then could say, *The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed.*

There are some Things besides our Lives and Persons, in which, if we are touch'd, we think ourselves extreamly injur'd ; and they are especially our *Friends*, our *Fortunes* and *Religion* ; and *David* was in every one of these affected more or less by *Saul's* implacable Pursuit, and hunting after him. He was constrain'd to change his Habitation, carry his Father and his Mother, and his whole Family, into a strange Country, aged and feeble, as they needs must be. To be forc'd, when one is growing old, and stooping with Infirmities, to forsake one's Native Place, the Dwelling of one's Ancestors, the Comforts of good Neighbourhood, the usual Prospects and familiar Objects of one's Sight, with all the old Conveniencies of Life, in the way one is in ;

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for a strange Country, barbarous Neighbours, new Laws and Usages, and Tongue unknown, must needs be hard and troublesome to Human Nature, and an Oppression scarce to be endur'd: Yet this was *David's* Case, who felt these Evils in himself; but much more sensibly in the Distresses of his Parents, who, by the Fury of the King, were driven to *Mispeh of the King of Moab*.

And then for his *Estate*, it could not otherwise be, but he must suffer much in that respect, it was impossible to remove his whole Effects: Kings have long Hands, and piercing Eyes, and by their Officers can reach and see at mighty Distance. And *Saul* had *Harpies* in his Court undoubtedly, as well as other Kings, ready to beg and seize upon the Estates of such as by their Crimes, or their Misfortunes, were obnoxious to the King's Displeasure.

Lastly, For his *Religion*, Although he suffer'd nothing *for* or *by* it, yet much he suffer'd for the want of it; to be driven away into a wicked and idolatrous Country, and he debarr'd the Exercise of his Religion; to be hurry'd from God's Temple, and the communicating in the appointed daily Service of that Holy Place, was little less than painful Martyrdom to one so zealously and so devoutly bent as *David* was.

Let any Man recount the Evils I have mention'd, sum up the Persecutions and the Provocations of King *Saul*, and set before his Eyes, himself, or any one in *David's* Case, wrong'd in his Honour, divorc'd from his Nuptial-Bed against his Will, despoil'd of his Estate and Property, wounded in the Distresses and Afflictions of his Parents, attempted privately to be destroy'd, pursued in Publick as an Enemy, and hunted like a Partridge on the Mountains, and forc'd to wander like a Fugitive, and seek his Bread out in desolate Places, and in a manner Ex-

commu-

communicated, by being barr'd the Use and Exercise of his Religion : Let any Man, I say, but put himself in these bad Circumstances, and find himself in a Capacity of delivering himself from out of them, as *David* was, and think with himself what he would do. No,--- 'tis not that I would advise him to,--- let him rather think what *David* here did,--- *The Lord forbid, that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed.*

There's hardly any one of all these single Passages that happens to our selves, or our Acquaintance, but puts us to Extremity, and provokes us beyond all Patience ; we call it an intolerable Oppression, and weary Heaven and Earth with our Complaints, and think our selves undone, till we have found our Satisfaction or Revenge. How restless are we in contriving Snares, how quick in catching Opportunities, and how malicious in improving them to our ill-natur'd Purposes ! Much otherwise was it with righteous *David* here, who call'd not to his Mind his past Wrongs, nor cast his Dangers and Oppressions up, to make a terrible Account ; who consulted not with Flesh and Blood, nor debated the Matter with those ill Advisers within, his Choler and Revenge, who cure one Evil by a hundred worse : Yet he, as he had most Reason, so had he most Opportunities, and most Advantages, to carve out whatever Satisfaction he might judge sufficient : Which is what for his Honour, and our Instruction, I must *Secondly* insist on.

He was, *First*, The King's Son-in-law, one of the greatest Honours in the Kingdom, and an Advancement that must needs draw after it a great many Friends and Favourites, and make him strong Alliances at Court ; and tho' those Friendships commonly live but like Flies, while the benign and

quickning Influences of the Sun continue, and dye upon the Frowns and Lowrings of their Prince; yet 'twere too hard a Reflection on the Lightness of those Places, to think such solid Virtue, and unquestion'd Merit, as eminently shone in *David*, had not acquir'd him a considerable Party, and a well-grounded Interest at Court.

But, *Secondly*, he was a mighty Man of Valour, he fought the *Lord's Battels*; he was the Sword and Shield, the Horsemen and the Chariots of *Israel*: He was the Scourge of the *Philistines*, and indeed of all the Idolatrous Nations round; the great Defender of the *Jewish* Faith, and the Supporter of God's Worship. And 'tis hard to think a Man thus qualify'd, should fail of bearing Sway amongst the Soldiery, and being gracious in the Camp; and all Men know, how far that tends to the promoting and securing any great Designs.

Thirdly, This *David* was belov'd of all the People, the Favourite of his Country, the very Idol of the Crowd. His Youth, his Beauty, his attractive Grace, and popular Deportment, together with his Virtue and his Valour, had stol'n the People's Hearts, and charm'd them so to Love and Admiration, that he became the Theme of their perpetual Talk; their Songs and Dances were compos'd in honour of his great Achievements, and all their Instruments of Joy and Musick, were tun'd to his invidious Praises. How harsh and rude must those Expressions of their Pleasure be, how unmannerly and ill-natur'd a Triumph, to have the Women come to meet the King himself, and grate him with the Burthen of their Song, *Saul hath slain his Thousands, and David his Ten Thousands*. I do not wonder much, when I consider Human Nature, that *Saul* (as it follows in the next Verse) *was very wroth, and the Saying displeased him*; and then upon a Repetition of that Sentence,

'twas very natural to infer, *What can be have more but the Kingdom?* 'Tis fatal to a Prince to lose himself, or suffer any else to get the Affections of his People. A King may be as wroth as *Abasuerus* was, and may decree terrible Things, and Priests may preach up Patience and Obedience long enough; but 'twill not do, unless the Affections of the Subjects go along therewith. He that hath never gotten these, or lost them once, may find to his Cost, whene'er he comes to try, that the Ties of Duty are not half so strong as the Bands of Love; nor the Service of the Body comparable to the Affections of the Mind; whereas he that hath gain'd the Heart, will certainly be Master of the Hand and Service on Occasion. And this was it that *Saul* foresaw and dreaded so; and this was it that *David* was already in Possession of. But notwithstanding all this, great as he was in Court, great as he was in Camp, and greater yet in favour of the People, he would not venture on the impious Fact; still it was, *The Lord forbid, that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed.*

The Lord forbid; yet *David* knew it was this very Lord that had rejected *Saul* from being King, that rent the Kingdom from him, and that repented he had ever made him King at all. Nay, *David* knew himself the Man design'd by God to be his Successor, and had accordingly been anointed King by *Samuel*, at the Town of *Bethlehem*.

'Tis surely with Ambition, as with other Passions, the fantastick and imaginary Joys are greater than the experienc'd and substantial ones: The Hopes and Expectations far exceed the Pleasures of Possession. Whatever Cares belong to Crowns, they lye conceal'd within their Circles, and are more seldom seen than felt; and therefore more engage in their Pursuits, than are contented when they get

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them. But this Temptation found no place with David; young, and gay, and vigorous as he was, and even so near the Crown, that by conniving at *Abishai's* Blow, he might have been in full and sure Possession of it; yet he suffered not himself to be transported beyond the Bounds of rigid Honesty and Loyalty; and still cries out, *The Lord forbid.*----

Now, to conclude, and to compleat this Character, add, *Lastly*, to these great Advantages of being Son-in-law, a mighty Man of Valour, and accepted in the Sight of all the People, of knowing *Saul rejected*, and himself design'd for Successor, the greatest yet of all Advantages, and that is *Opportunity*; that, without which all others signify but little; and that, with which alone Men serve their Turns, and make up the Defects of all the rest; that Pandar to all Sin, and fatal Snare of Virtue! That that has ruin'd many Thousand Souls, and betray'd them into most detestable Commissions; sometimes against the best Convictions of their Understandings; nay, and sometimes against their Vows and Resolutions: Opportunity, that few have Virtue, few have Strength sufficient to withstand! And of all Opportunities, none are so strong, and work so powerfully upon the Minds of Men, as those that look like *Providential* ones, and seem to come from God. Yet this was David's Opportunity, and yet withstood. *Behold*, said the Men of David to him, Chap. xxiv. and ver. 4. *Behold the Day, of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand, that thou may'st do unto him as shall seem good unto thee.* And again, in the Chap. of the Text, and ver. 8. *Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine Enemy into thine hand this Day; now therefore let me smite him, I pray, with the Spear unto the Earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time.* As if he had said, "Look round
" you

“ you, noble Youth, and see how Heaven and
 “ Earth conspire in your Advancement ; mark how
 “ the Providence of God hath ordered every Thing
 “ in your behalf, contriving every Circumstance to
 “ concur in setting the Crown upon your Head.
 “ How many *Psalms* have you compos’d, how ma-
 “ ny Vows, how many earnest Prayers have you
 “ put up, that God would visit your Afflictions,
 “ confound your Enemies, and redeem you from
 “ Distress? Behold then, in this Opportunity, your
 “ Prayers are answered, and your Vows returned.
 “ This is the Day, this is the Time, of which the
 “ Lord said, *I will deliver thine Enemy into thine Hand.*
 “ Is it not he, and he alone, hath wrought this
 “ great Salvation for thee? With his own Right-hand,
 “ and with his holy Arm, hath he bestow’d on thee
 “ this Victory. What could our few and feeble
 “ Troops have done against a Royal Army, had not
 “ the Finger of Good been visible in all this Action;
 “ had not his gracious Providence dispos’d of all
 “ Events in favour of your Claim? *It is the Lord’s*
 “ *doing, and marvellous in all our Eyes*; improve it
 “ therefore to his Honour, and the advancing his
 “ Designs, in setting you over his chosen People.
 “ Will you withstand the Purposes of God, or will
 “ you not concur with his good Providence? God
 “ hath delivered *Saul* into your Hands, and do not
 “ tempt the Lord, by slighting or neglecting of his
 “ Times and Seasons; ’twere Madness and Impiety
 “ to let him scape: You must not think the Lord
 “ will work out such Deliverances every Day; to-
 “ Day you are a Conqueror and a King, if you
 “ but please; to-Morrow you may be a Rebel and
 “ undone, and who shall pity you? You shall not
 “ need to imbrue your own Hands in his Blood;
 “ you shall not need to incur the Odium of com-
 “ manding such a Thing to any else; I’ll spare your
 “ Fame

“Fame the Guilt of both; permit me only, by my self, to be the Minister of Providence, the Executioner of God’s Designs.” This was the Sense and Purport of *Abishai’s* Speech, and carried so much Force and worldly Reason with it, that none but one that had the Fear of God continually before his Eyes, could possibly withstand it, or say with *David*, *The Lord forbid, that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord’s Anointed.*

And now having done what Right I could to the particular State and Circumstances of *Saul* and *David*, King and Subject, and shew’d such Provocations on the one hand, and such Temptations and Advantages on the other, as it may be never did before, or never will again hereafter happen:

I am to proceed, and consider, *Secondly*, The Reason *David* gave for his Refusal of *Abishai’s*, and the Soldiers Proffer, *It is the Lord’s Anointed.*

By the *Lord’s Anointed* is here meant, the Man that was by God’s Designation and Appointment anointed King or Captain over all the People, which was done by the Ceremony of pouring a Vial of Oil upon his Head, and kissing him: So that *the anointed of the Lord*, signifies no more than an ordinary King with us. *David* therefore would not stretch forth his Hand against *Saul*, because he was *his King*: He would fly from before him, though he was his King, as he did from *Keilah*; and he would gather up 600 Men to guard him from the Violence of (I will not say the King, but) his illegal and blood-thirsty Servants that pursued him: But he would not touch the King’s *Life*; and because he has express’d no other Reason, than that he was the *Lord’s Anointed*, that is, a *King*, we must either conclude, that the Laws of God, or the fundamental Constitutions of the Nation had guarded the Persons of their Kings from any Violence; or
else

elfe that *David* abstained out of a Principle of Tenderness; or from the Unreasonableness of the Thing it self; or from the Infamy that always waited on that wicked Practice. The *Law of God* did certainly secure the Lives of Kings as well as other Mens, if it did not more. And it appears by the very Name of *Treason*, that the *Civil Constitution* had preserv'd the Royal Person sacred and inviolable; and if we take our Measures from the absolute and arbitrary Sway of all the *Eastern Monarchs*, we cannot but conclude the Customs of *Judea*, amongst the rest, must have conciliated a mighty Awe and Reverence to their Princes. ---- And for the *unreasonableness* of such Attempts, it is plain, that a Government can't possibly subsist for any time, where any kind of Violence is allowed against the Magistrate. We see what wicked Work is made in some unhappy States, where private Executions of Revenge betwixt Particulars are indulg'd, or frequently conniv'd at. But Government is at an end, where *Rulers* are expos'd to popular Assaults, or private Assassinations: Besides, there is a great Indecency in the Nature of the Thing; to see the Lord and Master of a Nation reduced to wretched Villany; to see the Man whom all the Kingdom honour'd and ador'd, despis'd and trampled on; but most of all, to find a Sovereign Arbiter and Disposer of his Subjects Lives, to be despoil'd of his own. But, *Lastly*, 'tis, and has always been, and always will, I hope, be infamous to shed their Blood.

Altho' Mankind has generally a Relish of Liberty, and has for every Age receiv'd the Mention of its brave Assertors with Reverence and Esteem; yet, I know not how, where-ever it has been vindicated by the Blood of Kings, (tho' they were truly very bad) it gives some kind of Shock to Human Nature, and blemishes the Glory of the Action.

Never

Never, perhaps, was any Man more fitted for the vindicating the ancient Liberties of *Rome*, than *M. Brutus* was; a sober, virtuous, honest, and disinterested Man, freed from all Imputation of Revenge or Malice by his Enemies, and one that had no other Prospect in the World, than the redeeming of his Country from its Slavery; and yet because he could not compass his Intent, but by the Death of its brave Ravisher, his Virtues and most noble Qualities have all been lost under the Infamy of *Parricide* and *Traytor*: So natural an Abhorrence have all Men for shedding of Princes Blood, and taking away their Lives.

But what then, Is the World provided for no better than so? Hath God indeed subjected all Mankind to the tyrannick, impotent, and arbitrary Sway of some few Men, who have sometimes less Wisdom, and frequently less Virtue than their Neighbours? It fares but ill, it seems, with us, when our Estates and Properties, our Lives and Persons, Wives and Daughters, our Liberties and our Religion too, are put into the Hands of some weak, wicked, or perverse, yet uncontrollable Humour; will not this Impunity breed greater Licentiousness in Princes, and augment the Slavery of the Subjects to such degree, as it can go no lower; and so the Sacredness of one Man shall be the Ruin of many Thousands? In answer to this, we must acknowledge, That according to Nature and good Reason, there seems to be a great deal of Iniquity and Partiality in these Cases; but we must say withal, that Religion is neither chargeable with these Hardships, nor answerable for them; God hath declar'd himself in favour of no one sort of Government, with respect to all the World, nor laid it by Command on all People: Our Saviour said, *His Kingdom was not of this World*, and did indeed concern himself with nothing of it. *St. Peter*
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and St. *Paul* did press Obedience and Subjection on the Christians, as they found occasion; but then it was Obedience and Subjection to the Laws and different Constitutions of the different Governments they liv'd under, and did not thereby change, or think of changing them.

There were, no question, in the Apostles Days, very different Forms of Government in the World, some absolute, and some limited; some made their Will the Law, and others govern'd according to known and settled Laws; some succeeded by way of Inheritance, and others were elected to the Rule: Now, if when St. *Paul* and St. *Peter* press the Christians they wrote to, to Submission and Obedience, they only mean, that those *particular* Christians should obey the particular Governments they liv'd under; then there arises no Obligation to any other Christians to obey their Governors, by virtue of any thing said by these Apostles. But if *all* Christians are hereby understood to be exhorted to Obedience to their Governors (as most undoubtedly they are) then are all Christians exhorted to pay such Obedience to their Governors, as the particular Constitution of the Government they liv'd under call'd for and requir'd. And then the Christians who liv'd under an absolute Monarch, were to pay such Obedience as that Government requir'd; and the Christians who lived under a limited and mixed Monarchy, were to obey as that Government requir'd; and so of all the rest, they were all to submit themselves to the several Governments they liv'd under. For 'tis not to be presum'd, that St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* by their pressing and commanding Christians to submit to and obey their Governors, chang'd the several Forms and Constitutions of Government, and requir'd the Christians of a limited and mixed Monarchy to obey their Superiors in the same manner

ner, measure and degree, as those of an *absolute* one did theirs; but Christianity requir'd such Obedience as the Laws and Customs of the Country call'd for, and exacted at their Hands: And, truly, it would be strange to imagine, that Christianity should press Men to obey, in Instances where the Laws of the Country require no Obedience; since every Country is presum'd to understand and consult its own Interest best, and to secure such Obedience from the Subjects, as would best procure and continue such their Interest. And therefore if one Country had liked and approved of such a Form and Constitution of Government, and found it best and fittest for it, with respect to its Situation, and its Neighbourhood, and to the Temper and the Genius of its People and Inhabitants; if it had pitch'd upon such Laws as it found by Experience most convenient for it; if such and such were the Powers and Prerogatives of the Superiors, and such and such the Privileges and Immunities of the Subjects, Christianity did not intend to alter this, and say, that the Superiors shall have more Power and a fuller Authority over the People, and the People shall have less and fewer Privileges than what are already agreed to on both hands; neither did it come to set the People higher, and the Princes lower than they were. Christianity did not meddle with these Matters, nor say any thing on either side, but coming to settle Peace and Quiet, Truth and Honesty, Justice and Religion, in the Hearts of all Men, and to make the whole World easy and happy; it commanded Governors to exercise their Power with Justice and Uprightness, with Clemency and Prudence, and all Subjects to obey with Reverence and Submission, with Patience and Contentedness; but it came not to alter Constitutions nor to give either Governors or People more Power

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and Authority than they had before: For if it had, it had brought a Sword along with it, it had come to set the Princes of the World at Variance with the People, and the People with their Princes; to prejudice Mens Civil Rights and Liberties, and put them in a worse Condition, as to this World, than they were in before, by overthrowing settled Laws, by undoing Compacts and Agreements, the only Preservatives of Civil Society. In a word, there would be no end of the Mischiefs that would ensue upon understanding Christianity to oblige all People of the World alike to Obedience and Submission to their Rulers, without respect to the different Laws and Constitutions of different Kingdoms and Governments; and it would be a very bad Account and Character of that Religion: Whereas, if Christianity came to urge Obedience to the Laws of every Country (not barbarous, obscene, nor impious, nor any ways execrable) it came to secure that Country in the way and manner it thought the best and fittest for its Interest and Happiness, and brought a Blessing with it; and shewed both to Prince and People, what was the Measure and the Rule of the one's Power, and of the other's Obedience; a Thing most necessary to be known, where the Event is of so great Importance, both in this World, and that to come. Since therefore Christianity came not to *make* the Laws that Subjects must obey, but to urge the Subjects to obey the Laws *made* by the Legislative Power, where-ever that resides; there is no Reason why it should be charg'd with any of the Mischiefs or the Inconveniencies of a Government too absolute, or too much limited: And therefore, (to bring the Matter home) the unlimited Extent of Power, placed in the Prince's Hands, or the Sacredness of his Person, or his being unaccountable to any one for his Proceedings, are Things

that depend entirely on the Civil Constitution, and we must know them from the Laws, and the continued Usages and Customs of the Country, immemorial, or agreed upon.

No doubt but Kings may take up Crowns on pitiful and wretched Terms, as well as Subjects willingly submit their Liberties to the Will of Princes; and each of them must stand to the Conditions, tho' very inconvenient ones, till they can honestly obtain better. I know no better, and no other certain Rule for all the World to consider, than this, *Look to the Constitution, look to the Laws and Customs of a Country*, if you would know the Prince's Power or Peoples Privilege. It is not to the Men of great Reason, and much Reading, the finest Speculators and Essayers, one should be referr'd to upon these Occasions; but to the Histories and Records, the Laws and Statutes, Customs and Usages that are accepted in a Nation; and therefore, where by these, we find the Lives and Liberties of Princes are held sacred and inviolable; 'tis to no purpose to object the Inconveniencies, both real and imaginary, that may arise from such Impunity. *Look to the Laws and Constitution.* I see, in such a Case, no way is left, but to say with David, in the Text, --- *The Lord shall smite him, or his Day shall come to die, or he shall perish in the Battel; but God forbid, that I should stretch forth my Hand against the Lord's Anointed.*

The Lord shall smite him, or his Day shall come, or he shall perish in the Battel; that is, I leave him to God's Disposal; let God, the Judge of all the Earth, do with him as he pleases. And tho' we think the leaving wicked Kings to God, is the lightest and the kindest Expression of nothing in the World that can be; yet we would quickly alter our Opinions, and

and be of *David's* Mind, if we would give our selves leave to consider,

First, That he hates Injustice more,
Secondly, That he is much more *ready*, And,
Thirdly, Much more *able* to punish it, than we can be.

First, He hates it more : He hates it purely for the Malice of its Nature, and its intrinsick Evil ; we only for our own and Interests sake, because we either feel or dread its Mischiefs. He hates Oppression, Tyranny, and Cruelty, because they are the Contradictions of his own Divine, and the Corruptions of our Human Nature : They are directly opposite to his most glorious Attribute of Justice, to his most gracious ones of Mercy and Compassion. He looks with Indignation on those haughty Sons of Violence and Injustice, that abuse the Power that God entrusted them, and the great Titles that he honoured them withal, for the Use and Benefit, to the Destruction and Confusion of the World, only to satisfy their cruel Rage, or vain Ambition. There's not a Groan nor Murmur of the poor oppress'd, but makes its way to Heaven, and finds Accession to the Throne of Grace ; he numbers all our Sighs, and counts our Tears, and notes down our Afflictions in his Book, and treasures them in Wrath, against the Day of Wrath. And if we would be strong and patient for a while, and tarry but the Lord's Leisure, we should certainly see, he is a God that hates and punishes Iniquity.

Secondly, He is much more *willing* to punish wicked Governors than we can be. Not that the Goodness of God is so ready to afflict or grieve the Sons of Men, as they are to deserve it ; or that the human Fury does not sometimes anticipate the divine

Vengeance; but that it is more present to his Nature, and more immediately his Will to punish Sin, than it can possibly be with us. The Love of Justice, and the Hate of Sin, is so essentially united to his Being, that one may sooner fancy no Divinity at all, than that it is not willing *to reward the proud Oppressors after their Deservings.*

Men may be brib'd by Passions, Interest and Affections, some from pursuing, others from administering the Justice due to great Offenders. The Fears and Threatnings of Displeasure, the Hopes of Favour and Advancement, the Charm of soft Words, and the natural Pity of Mankind, have oftentimes diverted the most Resolv'd, and laid the Fury of the most Enrag'd. But God, as he sees not with Mens Eyes, so neither is he mov'd with human Motives; but is inflexible in his Decrees, which are to punish great Delinquents with great Wrath; and has declar'd, that nothing but sincere Repentance can prevent his Judgments.

And, *Lastly*, He is much more able. He is able to punish them in this Life, and in the next: He can punish them in this Life, by defeating all their Enterprizes, and blasting all their Purposes; by infatuating their Counsellors, and turning the Wisdom of *Achitophel* to Folly and Destruction; by suffering the Enemy to sow Dissensions, Strife and Discord in their Nations; by alienating the Affections of the People; by scattering the Spirit of Fear and of Distrust throughout their Armies, and causing them to turn their Backs upon their Enemies; and by reducing them themselves to Misery and great Distress; and sometimes suffering them to perish by the Sword, or some more ignominious Death, as well as common Men. But if this be not enough, let them know, that *he is able, after he has destroyed the Body, to cast both Soul and Body*
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into Hell Fire. Tophet, saith Isaiah, the xxxth and the 33d, is prepar'd for the King, he hath made it deep and large : the Pile thereof is Fire, and much Wood ; the Breath of the Lord, like a Stream of Brimstone, doth kindle it. Hear therefore, O ye Kings, (in the vith of the Wisdom of Solomon) and understand ; learn ye that be Judges of the Ends of the Earth ; give Ear you that rule the People, and glory in the Multitude of Nations ; for Power is given you of the Lord, and Sovereignty from the Highest, who shall try your Words, and search out your Counsels ; because being Ministers of his Kingdom, you have not judg'd aright, nor kept the Law, nor walked after the Counsel of God, horribly and speedily shall he come upon you ; for a sharp Judgmen't shall be to them that be in high Places ; for Mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty Men shall be mightily tormented.

And is it not a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God, thus sharpen'd and prepar'd to execute full Vengeance on ungodly Governors ? It is not therefore so unreasonable and trifling a Thing as is commonly reputed, to say, that wicked Princes must be left to God ; it is saying, they are left to one that hates them with a perfect Hatred ; to one that will and can pour out the Vials of such Wrath upon their Heads, as neither Eye can see, nor Tongue express, nor Heart of Man conceive, and that to all Eternity.

And having thus gone thro' my Text, I should in the last place, apply my self to the sad Occasion of this Day's assembling ; but having been so free in handling the first Parts, I shall scarce be allow'd to do right at full to this ; and there is, I hope, the less occasion for it, because the sad History is so well known, and so sufficiently regretted and deplored by honest Men ; and the Design especially of this Anniversary being more for the Use,

Instruction, and Advantage of the living Subject, than for the Praise and Honour of the dead King; the Discourse I have rais'd from the Text, will, if attended to, answer the greater and the better End; and there is little need to meddle with the second and the less.

That Prince's Praises speak themselves aloud; and tho' Misfortunes add great Lustre to Mens Virtues, and set them off to great Advantage, (as Tears shew some fair Faces yet more beautiful) yet *Charles the First* might well have past for one of our most excellent Kings, altho' he had not had the Exercise of such Afflictions as he met withal, but had been always fortunate. But having had the Advantage of those Trials, and thereby practis'd many other Virtues, rare and unseen in Kings, I know not now whom to prefer before him; and God forbid I should be thought to put him under the Disadvantage of representing *Saul* in the Comparison. He was (and that is as much as I can say) no more like *Saul*, than any of his *Murderers* was like *David*. If there was some Misgovernment, and some unhappy Male-administration in his Reign (as who can be so ignorant and partial to deny it) we must, if we will be just to the Truth, discharge his Person, in great measure of it, and lay it where it ought to lye, much of it on some of his indiscreet and zealous Servants, who were unquestionably Men of better Meaning than Abilities, and who appear (at least at so much Distance) not to have understood sufficiently the Ground they stood upon, the Times they liv'd in, and the Men they had to deal withal; and somewhat on the Passions of her, who, tho' she could intend no ill to him, yet thro' her Fondness for her Party, (that constant Mischief to this Nation) embroil'd him first with his distemper'd People. But having taken this Liberty, I ought

to add, that never were Miscarriages improv'd to such a height, nor aggravated with more Malice: Their Adversaries got some Truths, and us'd them, as the Devil does the Scriptures, always perversely, and to bad Purposes; they mingled them with odious Calumnies and Slanders, and treacherous Insinuations; and made them help to make the stronger Poison, and to disperse it more effectually into the Peoples Veins.

As to the Personal Virtues of this Prince, Envy it self hath never yet found any Thing to say against them: Sober and temperate to a wonder, chaste to his Queen, and faithful to his first Vows; of so pure Innocence, and such unspotted Sanctity in that behalf, that Calumny hath never fix'd so much as a Suspicion on his Reputation. And for his Zeal to God, and his Devotion to his Service, his constant Attendance and good Behaviour in his Prayers, his firm Adhesion to the Church, not out of Prejudice or pertinacious Obstinacy in what he had been educated, but true and solid Understanding of her Constitution, with his great Care and Love to all her Ministers, as they were made his Crimes and Accusation by his Enemies, so by his Friends they have been made an Objection to God's Providence, in suffering such a Righteous Prince to fall into the Hands of such abominable People; and such an Objection as must stay (they think) to be solv'd by that great Day, when all such Arguments will certainly be fully answered, and all such Clamours silenced, and all the World shall see and feel that God is just, and no Unrighteousness dwells with him.

And yet we cannot strictly say, this Day's Offence hath been hitherto unaccounted for, and unavenged. No Man (I think) can assign any one Head, to which we may so properly ascribe

the continual Troubles and Alarms that have for many Years disturb'd this Nation, the vast Calamities and most amazing Distresses it has labour'd under, as to the atrocious and most execrable Action of this Day, and its most cursed Consequences, the debauching both the Morals and Religion of our Princes and great Men. Had not our Sins increas'd with our Afflictions, I should have hoped, this Day's Offence had now been fully expiated, by that long Train of Mischiefs that has followed by way of *Consequence*, if not *Retaliation*. But if there yet remain any Dregs of Wrath for us to drink, I know of nothing that can possibly prevent them, or support us under them, but true sincere Repentance, which thro' the Merits of the Blood of Christ, will wash away all past Offences, reconcile us again to God, and fit us for what future Favours we shall want, either as private People, or a Nation, and he in his abundant Wisdom and Goodness shall see expedient for us.





S E R M O N V.

Preach'd before the

K I N G

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W H I T E - H A L L,

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TUESDAY, Novemb. 5. 1700.

St. Matthew, Chap. XXIII. Ver. 15.

*Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites ;
for ye compass Sea and Land, to make one
Profelyte ; and when he is made, ye make him
twofold more the Child of Hell than your selves.*

OUR Saviour being sent of God, to reform the
World in general, and in particular the great
Corruptions that had over-spread the *Jews*, his own
People, both in their Practice and Opinion, found

the greatest Opposition to his good Design from the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who being in great Reputation with the common People for their scrupulous, precise Observance of all the Traditions of the Elders, and a seeming Austerity of Life and Manners, led them where-ever they pleased, and prejudic'd them exceedingly against his Doctrine and his Person. He therefore sets himself to undeceive these People, and let them know what false and wicked Men these their Guides and Directors were, and how unworthy of their Admiration and Esteem; that they were not in the least the Men they would appear to be; but endeavour'd, in all their Actions, to make a fine Shew of Zeal and Holiness, without any Truth or Substance at the bottom; and cover'd very bad Designs under these Masks and fair Pretences. Upon this account it is, that in all his Denunciations of Wo and Wrath to the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, he also adds, that they were *Hypocrites*. He says, *They bound heavy Burthens, and grievous to be born on other Peoples Shoulders, but would not themselves move them with one of their Fingers*; laid heavy Penances on others that offended, and told them a world of Things were absolutely necessary; but liv'd themselves at ease, free from that Discipline; *that all they did, was to be seen of Men*, and to receive their Praise and Honour, living wholly to the World, and its Applause and Interest, without any good Design in any thing they undertook. Amongst other Reproofs, this of the Text is one: That the very Zeal which they shew'd in converting *Gentiles* to the *Jewish* Faith, was at the bottom stark naught, and tended only to the greater Mischief of those poor People who were converted by them. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites; for ye compass Sea and Land, to gain one Profelyte; and when he is made,*

ye make him twofold more the Child of Hell, than your selves.

Which Words we will, *First*, Consider in themselves. *Secondly*, See what Use we may make of them : And, *Lastly*, Make what Application may be proper to this present Occasion.

I. Of the Words in themselves. *To make a Profelyte*, is to gain one over to our Party, or Opinion ; and for a *Jew* to make a Profelyte, was, to convert a *Gentile* from his Belief and Worship of many Gods, to the Belief and Worship of the One and only true God, and call'd by the *Jews*, the God of *Israel*. Some there were, who were thus converted, and went no farther ; others were perswaded to embrace the *Jewish* Faith in all its Branches ; to be circumcised, and to keep the whole Law of *Moses*, and to be made thereby Partakers of all the Blessings promised by God to *Abraham's* Children. The first of these were indeed Profelytes to Sense and Reason, and returned to Natural Religion, rather than Profelytes to the *Jewish* Faith ; any farther than that the Belief of one God was the chief Article of it, and that a *Jew* became the happy Instrument of bringing them to Reason. It is therefore very probable, that the Profelytes of which our Saviour speaks in this Place, were of the latter sort, such as were circumcised, and submitted to all the Law of *Moses*, and whatever else of Rites and Ceremonies, Customs and Traditions, were then held necessary at home, and preach'd abroad by these new Missionaries. *To compass Sea and Land*, is, to take great Pains, to labour hard, and go a great way, to undergo much Difficulty, and much Hazard, as they who make great Voyages by Sea, and Journeys by Land, are wont to do. *To make one twofold more a Child of Hell than himself*, is, to leave him in a worse Condition.

Condition than you found him by a great deal; to make him wickeder, and consequently much more liable to Punishment.

We must see a little into the Meaning of this. The bringing *Gentiles* from the Worship of many Gods to the Worship of One and the True one, was certainly a good Work, and therefore is not here condemn'd, we may be sure, by Christ; and the bringing them to the *Jewish* Faith, to the believing all that *Moses* and the Prophets had said, was still better; for thither our Saviour himself remits the *Jews*, when they would know, *who*, and *what* he was: *Search the Scriptures*, saith he, *for in them ye think ye have eternal Life, and they are they which testify of Me*. This was the best Preparation they could make to receive him as the *Messiah*, promised by God to the Fathers, and spoken of by *Moses* and the Prophets. Here the Particulars both of his Life and Death were to be found; and upon this Account, the *Jews*, who had these Scriptures in their Hands, and were obliged to read them carefully, are much more faulty in rejecting the *Messiah*, than others could be, who heard of no such Writings, nor receiv'd them as inspir'd Books; and therefore knew of no such Promises or Predictions to be fulfill'd. The converting therefore of *Gentiles* to the Belief of *Moses* and the Prophets, was the best Disposition they could put them in for entertaining the *Messiah*, when they should see him coming; and therefore the Zeal of these converting Missionaries, as far as it intended and effected this, was good, and was not condemn'd by Christ, we may be confident. And because the *Jews* were themselves circumcis'd by God's Appointment and express Command, and could not otherwise be call'd *Jews*, nor enter into Covenant with God, nor be Partakers of the Blessings and peculiar Privileges promis'd them as such;

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'tis very probable, they must induce the Converts they intended to make, that they might be Partakers of the same Promises, to enter into the same Covenant, by the same way the *Jews* did, namely, by being circumcised; and consequently they must become *Debtors to the whole Law*, and conform exactly to its own Rites and Ceremonies, as the original *Jews* did. Nor does there appear any thing blameworthy in all this; for besides that Christ himself submitted to Circumcision, and observ'd the Law of *Moses*, we find not any where, that he condemn'd any one for doing the like. And tho' he intended to abrogate that initiating Sacrament, and all the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*, in its proper Time, and might therefore think such Conversions to *Judaism* at such a Time, and so near the Period he would put to it, not very seasonable or necessary; yet 'tis not to be thought, he would condemn with such Severity and Sharpness, the Zeal of such as should attempt to convert the *Gentiles* to perfect *Judaism*, which *they* thought necessary, and he himself had not as yet declar'd against, or disapproved.

Since, then, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were not themselves the Children of Hell for their being *Jews*, and for believing *Moses* and the Prophets, submitting to Circumcision, and observing the whole Law; we are not to think their Profelytes and Converts become Children of Hell, by becoming *Jews*; and much less doubly so, and worse than their Converters. But we must needs remember, that the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* are every where represented by Christ, as the great Corrupters of the *Jewish* Faith; they had so gloss'd and commented upon the Scriptures, that Truth was obscur'd and lost under them; they had so darkned Prophecies, that they had wholly laid aside the Expectation of their Completion at their proper Times and Seasons; or apply'd
them

them so to other Matters, that the People were diverted to Objects they had nothing to do with, and could not look to the Things that most concern'd them; they had superinduc'd such a world of Rites and Ceremonies to those that *Moses* had commanded them, (which one would have thought had been enow) that *Moses* would himself have hardly known his own Institution; and they were intolerably troublesome, by a most fanciful Significance, and became thro' Weakness and superstitious Fear, so necessary in the most common Actions of Life, that they were look'd upon as Parts of their Religion; and Men became defil'd and abominable by Neglect of them, and pure and holy by a nice Observance of them; they had made such an Exposition on the Commandments, that a Man might almost keep every one of them in breaking them. Our Saviour tells them, they had made *them of none effect, thro' their Traditions*; and a great part of his Business was, to bring them again to their old Sense and Signification; his Sermons were divided betwixt *Ye have heard of old*, and --- *but I say unto you otherwise*.

In a word, the Corruptions that reigned, and had done so a great while before amongst the *Jews*, were incredibly great, and most deplorable: And, in Truth, their Practice went hand in hand with them; their Doctrines were exactly calculated for Ease and Liberty, and for Indulgence to Vice and all Enormities. Our Saviour hated Sin with the most mortal Hatred, because he knew the Mischief that it did to those he loved, and knew what it at length would cost him; but never did a holy Prophet treat Sinners with more Mildness, Pity, and Good-nature, with less Upbraidings and Reproaches than he, where he discern'd the least Relenting Tendernefs, or Inclination to Goodness. And therefore one may easily believe, that where he is moved to speak the sharpest
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and severest Things, and to denounce such Wo and Wrath, there was the greatest Cause, and justest Provocation for it that could be; and therefore we may well conclude, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* were certainly the worst and wickedest of Men. This we may take for granted, because the Gospels are so full of it.

But what is the Connexion betwixt *their* being so wicked, and their *Profelytes* being as bad, or much worse? With some Probability this,--- That they who were themselves so tainted and corrupted both in Principles and Practice, would infuse the same corrupt Principles into their Disciples, and form them to the same Practice with themselves: They would deliver them the Law of *Moses*, the Lessons of the Prophets, and the Sum of the *Jewish* Faith, as they themselves had learnt it, with all the false Glosses, trifling Comments, unwarrantable Additions, wicked Distinctions, Relaxations, Dispensations of Duty, Commutations for Neglect; and in a word, with the whole corrupted Mass of their Traditions, which made the *Jewish* Church, at this Time, such an Abomination to Christ. There was all the Likelihood in the World, that People so very loose and wicked, would propagate their Errors and Corruptions; and the Disciples then must needs be as wicked as their Masters.

To say the Profelytes would be *tenfold more the Children of Hell*, than they who made them Profelytes, is an exaggerating Speech, and rather condemns the Masters than the Scholars: They who pretended so much Zeal, would teach the *Gentiles* such a Doctrine as would leave them worse than it found them; it would pervert their very natural Principles; and that which true Reason would instruct them in, and urge them to do, would be defeated by Traditions

tions of their Masters, and false Expositions of Commandments which came indeed from God.

I will give an Instance or two of this, because it is of Moment. We are made by God, by standing in need of one another's Assistance, to love one another, and to do each other all good Offices; in this we are instructed by the Light of Nature, and when we are secure our selves, we need no Command of God to carry us to the helping others in Distress; we do it of our own Accord, and condemn our selves in the Neglect of it, if we cannot make some good Excuse. This natural Obligation the *Jews* deliver themselves from, by expounding some Commands of God, which forbade them closer Commerce than ordinary with idolatrous Nations, for fear of being infected with their abominable Practices, to such a rigorous and unreasonable Extremity of keeping Distance, that they would not so much as do the common Offices of Humanity to any but *Jews*; they would see a Heathen perish for want of Necessaries, rather than supply him with them; they would not so much as look kindly, nor speak a good Word, much less bestow a Benefit on any one but *Jews*. They were remarkable for their morose, and sullen, and ill-natur'd Manners, and were equally hated and despised by all the World that knew them. This was not owing to Nature, nor to God's Commands, if rightly understood, but to a false and corrupt Exposition of them, begun in Error, and continu'd on by naughty Custom, and became in Time a venerable Tradition.

That which follows is much worse. The Light of Nature teaches all the World, without a positive Command of God, to succour and support our Parents Necessity; whether driven to it by Age, Infirmities, by Losses or Misfortunes, 'tis certainly our common Duty to do it, and nothing can dispense

with it, according to our Abilities; but the *Jews* determin'd, that if a Man had devoted his Estate to the Use of the Temple, or any part of God's Service, he was then acquitted of his Duty to his Parents; and if they came to him in never so great Distress, and begg'd his Help, he might answer them, No, *it is Corban*, that Estate with which I might have profited you, is dedicated now to God by Vow, and I can do you no farther Service. Thus, saith our Lord, *have ye made the Commands of God of no Effect or Obligation, by your Traditions*. These are plain Instances how the Light of Nature may be extinguish'd by pretended Revelation; and as plain Proofs, that such a reveal'd Religion (*i. e.* corrupted) is worse than *Gentilism*; corrupting their natural Notions of Good and Evil, and putting them on Practices that Reason, whilst untainted, would abhor.

But if these Words are to be understood exactly in the Letter, that the Profelytes would become much worse than they who gain'd them over, (of which I think there is no Necessity) then we may say, that so our Saviour saw it would actually be, tho' he assign'd no Reason why it would be so: But this we also may our selves observe, that so it sometimes happens, that People exceed their Masters and Corrupters in their own wicked Way; and outdo their Originals, becoming themselves Examples and great Models of Perfection in corrupt and sinful Practices. But as it is easier much, so it is more probable to think, our Saviour intended, by this severe and angry Scheme of Speech, to say the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, notwithstanding all their Zeal for Conversion of *Gentiles*, had better have let them alone; for that, being themselves so abominably corrupt, they could not but make their Profelytes more wicked than they found them, and as bad as them-

themselves, and consequently make them liable to greater Wrath and Punishment than they had been, had they continued in their Ignorance and Darknes.

II. Let us see, in the Second Place, what Use we may make of these Matters. And that will be, at this Time, to observe these Two Things: *First*, That wicked Men may be as full of Zeal as good ones, to propagate their Errors and Corruptions. And, *Secondly*, That therefore Zeal is not of itself to be regarded, but with Respect to the *End* it aims at, the *Means* it uses to accomplish the End, and the *Effect* that is like to follow.

First, Wicked Men may be as full of Zeal as good ones, to propagate their Errors and Corruptions. These *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, so often call'd upon by Christ, (and always for their Faults) were full of Zeal for converting *Gentiles*; and this is more observable, in that there is no Command in all the *Jewish* Law, obliging the *Jews* to labour for the Conversion of the *Gentiles*; a certain Sign this Law was not intended to be the standing Rule, and the Religion of the whole World. There is indeed Provision made in several Places of the Law, how to receive and use *Strangers*, in case they were willing to become *Jews*; and in the *lxth* of *Isaiah*, there is a large Prophecy, that Kings, and Nations, and many People should be gather'd to them; which may partly be applied to the *Jewish* State, before Christ's coming, tho' much more properly and truly to the Church of Christ. But there was no Command of God to set the *Jews* upon this Work of gaining them; and therefore the Zeal of doing it was so much greater, in being voluntary; and moreover, this their Zeal was accompanied with many Difficulties and Hazards, it cost them Time and Pains, and much Money; such Undertakings require

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them all ; *They compass Sea and Land to gain a Profelyte.* No Dangers frightened them, they left their native Country, their Parents and Relations, their Ease, Estate, and all Conveniencies of Life, to enter on a strange Climate, unusual Diet, and a new way of living ; they ventur'd on unknown Countries, People of a new Tongue, new Customs, and new Manners ; and it may be where there were inhospitable Laws and rigorous Edicts against Foreigners, and Death itself denounc'd to such as would dare to decry the Religion, Gods, and Worship of the Country, and introduce a new Superstition. But neither the Storms and Tempests in their Passage, nor Death in all its frightful Shapes at Sea, nor all the Hazards of their Landing, and continuing in a strange Country, could hinder them from coming to convert them : No Considerations could abate their Zeal ; the Desire they had of doing them the greatest Good imaginable, carried it above their Security and Self-love, and private Interest, and all their Fears of Death and Danger.

Here is one among us that pretends to preach up Reformation, and exclaims upon the great Corruption of Faith and Manners that prevails among us, and especially his Superiors, the *Scribes*, and *Pharisees*, and Elders : He pretends, above all others, that his sole Aim is the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind : But, Do the Pains he takes, the Hardships he sustains, his tedious Journeyings by Land, or his perilous Voyages by Sea, do these give Testimony to his Zeal and good Designs ? Are these like the laborious and hazardous Undertakings of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, who compass Sea and Land to make a Profelyte, who think that all is well bestow'd, if they can gather up but one poor straying Sheep into the Fold of God's Church ?

This was the Zeal of those against whom the Woe in the Text is denounc'd ; they were, with all this Zeal, most wicked and corrupt People ; and, I think, I need not spend much Time in shewing that Zeal is common to all Men, of all Parties and Conditions, and is never, in itself, a Token of either a good or a bad Man, or of a good or bad Cause, or Design ; it is a natural Fervour and Warmth of Temper, rais'd higher than ordinary by some particular Considerations ; and apt to be so rais'd by that Readiness the Spirits and Blood are always in to Motion. And it has always been observ'd, that the worst Causes and Designs have been pursued with the greatest Degrees of Zeal, by the worst of Men. Whether it be, that good Men trust too far to the Truth and Justice of good Causes, believing their natural Force and Power to be much greater than they are ; or that they think they are so much the Care and Protection of God's Providence, that they may slacken their own Diligence, and leave it to him to secure, who loves their Cause, and is very able to look after it, and very much obliged, they think, in Justice and Honour to do it. Whatever it be that occasions it, 'tis commonly enough seen, that good People fall into Languors, Lukewarmness, and Indifference, and prosecute a good and righteous Cause with more Remissness, and less Zeal than is truly reasonable, or than becomes them ; and that wicked People pursue their unjust Designs and corrupt Interests with such Intention of Zeal, such Application, Diligence, and earnest Solicitation, that nothing can stand before them. Zeal therefore, of itself, tho' never so painful and laborious, and running never so great Hazards, is not to be regarded.

But, *in the Second Place*, Respect must needs be had to the *End* it proposes, the *Means* it pitches on, and the *Effect* that is like to follow.

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First, We must look to the *End* that Zeal proposes, whether it be good or bad, or mixt. The Pretence may be God's Glory, and the Salvation of Souls; the bringing People to the Knowledge of the Truth, and the correcting their bad Manners: This is an excellent and noble End, and worthy of all the Zeal, and Pains, and Hazard, that a Man can take and run; but this must be well look'd into, for this is generally pretended to by all Undertakers of Conversion, and makes their Way clear before them; and there is no doubt but the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* recommended themselves to their intended Profelytes by these Pretences, when yet, if we believe our Saviour, they thought of nothing less: They had other Purposes, and were excited by other Motives than God's Glory, and the Good of Souls; they had their own Interest and Vain-glory, and the making Parties. *I seek not yours, but you*, saith St. Paul to the *Corinthians*. But there are Missionaries of another Mind, that seek not Souls, but Gain, or Men for their Estates sake; and this is always to be well consider'd. Look well about, what sort of Countries these great Zealots chuse for Conquests; if it be *Tyre*, or *Sidon*, or *Damascus*, rich and trading Cities; or some obscure and poor, tho' populous Inland Places; and to what sort of People they apply themselves; whether the noble, generous, and wealthy, or to the poor and meaner ones. Mark if their Children flock to *Swedeland*, *Denmark*, *Norway*, *Lapland*, *Russia*, or to the poorer Quarters of *America*, with so much Haste, and in such Numbers, as to *Mexico*, *Peru*, the *Eastern Indies*, and to *England*. See if the Glory of God and Good of Souls make so much Noise in the cold and barren *North*, as they do in warmer, richer Climates, where Men reward as well as God; and yet where Souls are full as valuable and dear to him, as in the

Land of Havilah, where there is Gold and Bdellium, and the Onyx stone. Look therefore well to this, before you so commend the Zeal of those who compass Sea and Land to make a Profelyte ; see if there be no Interest at the bottom.

Another End that Men may have and serve by these Conversions, is, Vain-glory, the Pride and Pleasure of being thought and reported so zealous of propagating the Conversion of the World. It is not to be thought, without searching carefully into the bottom of one's own Heart, and observing narrowly the Principles and Practices of other People, what strange and difficult Things a Man's Vain-glory and Thirst of Fame and Commendation will put him upon, and make him undergo ; what Pains and Labour he will be at, what Hardships he will sustain, for the Reward of empty Praise and Admiration ? The Glory of excelling other People, of being eminently singular, and distinguishing one's self from the common Mass, hath occasion'd Men to run a Thousand Hazards both at Sea and Land, to do a Thousand Wonders, and has written at least a Hundred Thousand Books. Let us make good Use of every thing we can ; but this light Fancy is a great Ingredient in almost every human Composition. When we go to Reason, and think in earnest, we can hardly have the Confidence to charge any one, that he takes great Pains and runs great Hazard to satisfy his Vain-glory, and to obtain the Praise of doing something that other People do not, without intending any other better End ; when yet, if the Man would speak his Mind freely, this Principle is surely at the bottom. I make no other use of this sad Truth at this Time, than to suppose that Men may be stirr'd, even to undertake the best Designs, by the Desire of Praise and Glory, Approbation and Esteem, and to be thought so zealous of God's Honour and Man's Good,

to venture Life and Liberty to promote 'em, without intending them in earnest. I see no Reason to conclude better of the Missionaries concern'd in the Text, their whole Design being to make a good Appearance, and to shew well to the World, and to be praised of Men; and the taking so much Pains, and running so much Hazard, by compassing Sea and Land to make a Profelyte, was as likely to make a shew of true Zeal, and gain them the Admiration of the World, as any thing else, those Things being the *Tokens* that Men are truly in earnest.

The making Parties is also another End that designing People may possibly aim at, even in making Converts. This indeed does usually follow, whether Men design it or no; the Profelytes do generally adhere to their Converters Interest and Party with great Good-will, with the utmost Zeal and Perseverance; and are evermore the warmest in defending their new Choice, and in promoting it, and in withstanding and bearing down all its Opposers. This was found true in the Apostles Days, and *Justin Martyr* complains of it in his; and all Men have observ'd, that the new Converts are still the forwardest and most presumptuous, flaming with Zeal, as if they were to redeem the Time of their Ignorance past, make an Atonement for their former Opposition, or Neglect of Truth; and by something extraordinary, convince the World of the Sincerity and Earnest of their Conversion, making such quick Advances, and such forward Paces, that they may never think of cooling and retiring. This Temper is exceeding fit for Parties, and a rare Spirit for pursuing worldly Interests; and therefore they who have Designs of such a sort to serve, cannot do better than to make as many Profelytes as they can to their Religion, who are thereby engag'd most deeply in their Interests.

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Next to the *End* of Zeal, we are to consider the *Means* it uses to attain it: For true Religion will not be beholden to Evil, to obtain the Good it aims at; it acts most uniformly with itself, and pitches upon Means exactly just and honest; it pretends not to sanctify, by using them, Means that are in themselves unhallowed and abominable; but takes the Courses that are before acknowledg'd to be just, and reasonable, and lawful, to compass its End by. If the Glory of God and the Good of Souls be the true End of those who would convert and make Profelytes, the Means must not be such as would dishonour God, and prejudice a Soul disinterested and reasonable, against them. There must be nothing of Falshood, Cruelty, Impurity, or Impiety in them; for each of them are unworthy of God, and unbecoming a good Religion. There must be nothing contrary to our natural Notices; nothing contrary to our Senses; nothing contrary to the common Notions all Men have of Good and Evil. Whoever, in a word, to bring a Man to his Religion, will use such Means as that Religion does itself abhor and forbid, is not acted certainly by the true Spirit of that Religion, but by mistaken Zeal at least, if not some worse Principle: But because a Man, before he be a Profelyte, will hardly understand thoroughly what that Religion forbids, or admits of, he will be safe enough in rejecting that Religion that countenances Falshood, Inhumanity, impure Practices, or any thing that stands condemn'd by the Light of Nature, and the common Reason of Mankind.

And so one may say, *in the last place*; if the easy, natural, or common *Effects* of the Principles of Religion be like to be dishonourable to God, and unworthy of so good a Name, we may conclude against it, and condemn the Zeal that would promote it; for true Religion never can in itself, or

just Consequence, either dishonour God, or do Mischief to Mankind.

In passing our Judgment therefore upon Zeal, we must not barely regard the Pains it takes, nor the Hazards it runs in compassing Sea and Land to make Profelytes; but seriously respect the *End* it truly aims at, (not what it pretends), the *Means* it uses to compass that End, and the Effects that are likely to follow. All these Things must be consider'd, when we would understand, whether the Zeal of making Profelytes be truly good and laudable; for if either the *End* be naught, or the *Means* unlawful, or the natural *Effects* of such Conversion be the Corruption of good Manners; the Pains and Labours of these Missionaries, and the Hazards they run, are no good Arguments in their behalf: For the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* took all these Pains, and ventur'd all these Hazards, and yet were *Hypocrites*; they compass'd Sea and Land to make a Profelyte, and all they did by it, was, that they made him worse than he was before; and worse, if it could be, than themselves. This is the Use we may make at this Time of these Words of Christ.

III. The Application of what has been said to the Occasion of our present Meeting, may be this. We are to give God Thanks for the Deliverance of this Nation heretofore, from the Contrivance and Design of wicked Papists, to murder King and Prince, Bishops and Judges, Lords and Commons, met in Parliament, all at one Blow; a Work of the most devilish and deliberate Malice, quickest Execution, and most dreadful Consequence that can be thought upon. And, in the next place, to give God Thanks for a Deliverance of the Nation, of a fresher Date, from the Designs of the same Party, to destroy the Establish'd Church, (for they pretended Kindness to

the rest, and they believ'd them) to overturn our Laws, and govern by a Force that we were Strangers to. Of these Two Deliverances, the First was *accomplish'd* on this Day, by the Discovery of the *Powder-Plot*. The Second was *begun* by the King's Arrival on our Shoars, in order to preserve our Church, to settle and confirm our Laws, and to have us govern'd by them. These Two Deliverances happening on the same Day, we are to give God Thanks for both of 'em at the same time. Now both these dangerous Seasons, and all that came between them, were entirely owing to that intemperate, restless Zeal for our Conversion, with which these Children of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* incessantly pursue us; and for which they compass Sea and Land. And since there is no Plea that sooner makes them Way, and gains them a more favourable Admission, nothing that prepossesses Peoples Minds with kinder Prejudice, than seeing the Voyages and Journeys that they take from Foreign Countries, their Perils by Water, and Perils by Land, their Perils from Strangers, and Perils from their own Countrymen, from Clamour and Ill-will, and Penal Laws, and all to gain a Soul to God, and the true Religion; I thought it not amiss to shew you, what a Zeal the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had to make Profelytes in the like manner, and what Pains they also took to compass Sea and Land for the same Purpose, and yet they were Hypocrites themselves, and Corrupters of those they would convert; and that therefore Zeal alone was not to be regarded, without the Consideration of the End, the Means, and probable Effects of such Conyerfion. Let us, to save a little Time, suppose these Emissaries, who are, in proper Time and Place, as sharp and avaricious as the *Jews*, or *Banian* Merchants, the Masters of Sedition, Turbulence, and Faction, and the greatest Self-admirers in the

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the World ; let us suppose them, for once, to be, with respect to us, the most disinterested, undesigning, open, modest, humble Men, that can be ; and to have no other Aim or End, than the Glory of God, and the Salvation of *English Souls* ; yet what shall we do to justify the *Means* they take to compass this End by ? Will the good *End* sanctify Falshood, Villany, and Treachery, the Destruction of all our Liberties and Civil Rights, the Overthrow of all our Laws, and the delivering us up a Prey to the Insolence of arbitrary Power ? And if this cannot be brought about by civil Means, by artful Management, and Methods of Perswasion ; will it justify such wicked Courses, and such inhuman Cruelties, as were design'd this Day, to put an End to so many great and precious Lives among us ? Was this the way to save the *Souls* of those intended Victims, had they been purify'd by this strange Fire, and fitted for the Mercies of the Almighty ? The *End*, I doubt, must be forgotten here ; and this must be their way to bring their *Children* unto God, however ill it go with the poor Parents. But will the Children be inclin'd to think these Means are proper for Conversion, and for begetting a good Opinion in them of the Religion to which they are invited ? What sort of God is it, that is delighted with these human Sacrifices ? Does such a sanguinary Doctrine suit with Christ, who claims from God his Father, and from a soft and tender Virgin-Mother ? Will Children be induc'd to leave the merciful good Principles of Natural Religion, for these most violent and brutal ones of a pretended Revelation ? Can these abominable Cruelties make any other Impressions on the Standers-by, than those of Hatred and Abhorrence, and a Resolution of flying from them as soon as possibly they can ? The *Nero's* and the *Maximins*, the *Decii* and the *Diocletians*, thought this the Way, and took these

these Methods to extirpate Christ's Religion: They were most happily mistaken. But who would think that *Christians*, knowing this, should fall in with the same Courses, with just the contrary Design? Who would suspect Religion should be planted, settled, and confirm'd by Violence, by its great Friends, when its great Enemies use the same to root it up and destroy it? And yet we may defy the whole World to give us an Example (one Example) where *Popery* could, with its own Security, have ruin'd and destroy'd such as would not submit themselves to it, and did not. *Popery* is really an Usurpation on Christianity, and like Usurpers, lives within its Guards, Inquisitors, and Dragoons; it settles and supports itself by Gibbets, Axes, Halters, by Fire and Sword, and all the Instruments of Death, and cruel Executions. As I know there is no Encouragement to these Proceedings from *Christ's Religion*; so I would only ask them Reparations for the great Scandal and Dishonours they do hereby to *Natural Religion*, and to the common Principles of Reason and pure Humanity.

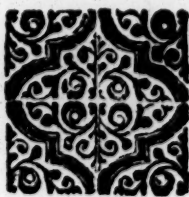
Let us see, *in the last place*, if the *Effects* be answerable to the *Pains* that are taken for our Conversion, when they take Place. How is the Matter mended with us? How is the Glory of God promoted, or the Good of Mankind, or the Salvation of Souls further'd? Do they tell us any thing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that is contain'd in the Scriptures, which we did not believe before? Have they one Article of Faith, of Christ's making, that we receive not equally with them? Or, in the Point of Duty and good Morals, is there one Command of Christ, that he enjoyns us to do, but we acknowledge we should do it; or one Thing he prohibits us, but what we own we should abstain from? To what new Rule must we submit and turn? If
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that be not true Christianity, to believe all that our Lord enjoyns us to believe, either by himself or his Apostles, to do whatever he commands, and to omit whatever he prohibits, to make the Word of God the Rule of Faith and Manners, to live in Union and Communion with our Pastors, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, rightly ordain'd, (even by our Adversaries themselves at first, if that will please) and in Love and Charity with one another; if this be not true Christianity, and indeed enough, where are we like to learn what is? And if it be, to what are we converted but to *Party*? Is God more honour'd by praying to Saints and Angels, than to him alone? Do we much glorify our Lord, by making a Thousand Mediators of Intercession for us, as well as He? Do we Honour and much Pleasure to a jealous God, to pray to any of his Servants for the same Favours and like Graces that we ask of him? Does he regard us more for kneeling down and offering up our Prayers, not to say Incense, before an Idol or an Image? Does he delight rather to hear his People pray in an unknown Tongue, than with their Understanding? Or is he better pleased with the retrenching of the Cup, than with his own Institution? I have neither Mind nor Leisure to speak to the Particulars in which we differ, the Diminutions and the Additions they have made *from* and *to* Christ's Religion, in both which true Popery consists. It is only to my present Purpose, to say, that there is not one Point of true *Popery*, that can make a Man a truer Believer, or a better Man than he was before in our Communion: And therefore, to what are *we* to be converted? What have we to believe, or what to practice, but what we own our selves obliged to do before?

How long then, shall we bear these *Scribes* and *Pharisees* among us, that are not only unnecessary,
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but pernicious to us? One would have thought, that the Contrivance of this Day had so justly provok'd our Ancestors, that they would never more have suffered such Incendiaries amongst us; but have executed constantly the Laws they had justly made against them. 'Tis better indeed to repent of Mercy shewn, than of Severity; but 'tis not good to repent of *that* too often. Instead of Quiet and Security gain'd by this Relaxation and Remission of *Penal Laws*, the Nation gave this Faction Breath and new Spirit. Unseasonable Condescensions do sometimes provoke to greater Insolence; and Mercy ill dispensed, *i. e.* to vile, ungenerous Spirits, is look'd upon as Fear, and encourages to bolder Undertakings. 'Tis now some Ninety five Years since this Conspiracy was to have taken place; yet from that Day to this, they have not lost a Foot of Ground among us in their general Interest; yet from that Day to this, they have been digging down our Walls and Fences, and undermining our Security; contriving the Destruction both of Church and State. The Nation was deliver'd on the *Fifth* of *November*, and on the *Sixth* we may well presume they began again to carry on the same Design of ruining our Peace by other Methods which they have pursued, even to this Day. Our Histories and our Memories are full of the Disturbance they have given us; they have contributed no less than all they could to the Misfortune both of Prince and People; they occasion'd a world of Troubles to one, and terribly embroil'd another; and to a Third, their Kindness, Favour, and Assistance, were as fatal, as their Malice and Opposition could have been, had they carried them never so high. Then did this lucky Day shine bright again, and brought a new Deliverance to the Nation; but would they make it only a Deliverance from a present Storm of Violence that was

ready to pour upon us? Our Enemies live again, and are mighty; it thunder'd for a Day or two, and they were frightned, and retir'd into their dark Recesses; but when the Noise was over, they return'd again to their old Business, our Conversion; and have since that, been busy at it, in despite of all our Laws and Statutes; we are indeed deliver'd from their open Insults, we would be also from their secret Underminings, from their Seduction of our People, their *leading Captive silly Women, and such as are laden with divers Lusts.* What do they here, in a Place, where they acknowledge no King, no Church, no Christians, but themselves and Party, unless it be to give us all these Things, they think we want? Why do they haunt our Sick, frequent our Prisons, and creep into Peoples Houses, raise false Reports, detract from our Advantages, exaggerate our Misfortunes, and reproach our Government? In a word, to compleat our Deliverance, we would intreat those Sons of Zeal, to return again unto their Holy City; and both for ours, and for their own sake, to spare their painful Compassings of Sea and Land, to gain a Profelyte, since they make him thereby a worse Christian, and a worse Subject than they found him.





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S E R M O N VI.

Preach'd before the

G E N T L E M E N

Educated at ETON College;

At St. *AUSTIN*'s Church, *London*.

On D E C E M B E R 6. 1701.





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To my worthy F R I E N D S,

Humphry Gore, <i>Esq;</i>	{ Stew- ards. }	Mr. Thomas Pellet.
Fran. Pemberton, <i>Esq;</i>		Mr. Henry Hoare.
Philip Percival, <i>Esq;</i>		Mr. Godf. Woodward.
Will. Cradock, <i>Esq;</i>		Mr. Edward Progers.
Thomas Betts, <i>Esq;</i>		Mr. James Ford.
John Eekins, <i>Esq;</i>		Mr. Joseph Williams.

Since, Gentlemen, it is at your Request alone that I make this Sermon Publick, it will lye upon you to make it as useful as you can to your selves and Acquaintance, by following the Advice it gives you your selves, and encouraging them to do the like. Nothing can do greater Honour to Eton School, than that the World should see those who are educated there, distinguish themselves by Virtue and good Manners, as well as Learning. If this Discourse shall contribute

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130 The DEDICATION.

*any thing to this good Purpose, it will be
worth your while to have asked it of me;
if not, I shall have lost my Labour, tho'
not my good Intentions of doing you Ser-
vice. I am, Gentlemen,*

Your Humble Servant,

W. FLEETWOOD,



JOB



JOB XXVIII. Ver. 28.

And unto Man he said, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.

JOB is, in this Place, endeavouring to perswade his Friends, that they were mistaken in their Accounts of God's Providence; that this was not the Course he took in governing the World, that the Good should always flourish, and the Wicked always suffer in this Life; that it was the worst way of judging either of Men or Causes, by Events; since God had not appointed any certain and invariable Rule to act by, but acted always well and wisely to be sure; but yet *by Counsels unsearchable, and by ways past finding out.* That, tho' he had made Man very curious and inquisitive, given him a large and comprehensive Soul, endued him with Abilities and Powers of great Extent, and that he was a wise, sagacious, understanding Creature, and could search very deep and wide into the Causes and Effects of Nature; yet that the Providence of God in governing the World, in ordering and disposing of Men's Persons and Affairs, was what they never could arrive at, a Thing remov'd beyond their Reach, a Secret not imparted to the World, but reserv'd to the Knowledge of God alone. This is the Connexion of this Chapter to the Twenty Seventh going before. You would, perhaps, know, why God punishes

some Men, and not all; with the like Questions; but all the Wit and Learning of the World can't tell you why. *Surely there is a Vein for the Silver, and a Place for the Gold where they find it.* And then he proceeds to sum up several Difficulties, wherein the Wit and Industry of Men had succeeded in their curious and laborious Searches; but Verse 12. *where shall Wisdom be found, and where is the Place of Understanding?* Poor Man may tire and lose himself in painful and solicitous Enquiries after the Reasons of God's Government, but never shall be able to find the Bottom of that Secret. And to shew it was not to be purchas'd by him, the Seven next Verses are employ'd to speak the Praises and the Value of this Knowledge; and at last, to put a Stop to all our Hopes and farther Searches, he tells us, Ver. 23. *God understandeth the Way thereof, and knoweth the Place thereof.* He understands, and none but He, the Way and Method of his own Providence; He only knows the Place where Wisdom dwells, which only is within himself; and since he is not pleased to communicate this Knowledge, it is our safest and our wisest way to rest our selves content without it; to make no farther Searches after what is hidden on purpose from us, either because it would be useless to us, or else because we are too weak to bear it. But then, that he might not seem to refuse us any thing that is truly excellent and serviceable to us in this mortal State, he imparts to us a Secret more desirable, and better worth our knowing by a great deal; and that is, how to govern and behave our selves amidst the various and unequal Dispensations of his Providence; that however the World might go, we might be safe if we would; telling us, that if our Searches were in earnest after Wisdom and Understanding, he would direct us so infallibly, that if we would but take the Course prescrib'd,

scribed, we should not fail of arriving to what we aimed at----- *And unto Man he said, Behold, the Fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.*

Secret Things belong to the Lord, (saith Moses, Deut. xxix. 29.) but those which are revealed belong to us, and to our Children, that we may do all the Words of this Law. How God disposes of his Creatures, and how he orders all Things here, is a secret of the Lord, and will be so ; and we, with all our Reason, cannot fathom that Abyss, and therefore it belongs not to us to enquire or know : But what he has revealed, belongs entirely to us, and was revealed for that very purpose, that we might understand and practise it. And that in short, is this, *That to fear the Lord is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil is Understanding.* This it is given to Man to know, this is enough to make him happy ; this is sufficient, this is proper for him ; this answers all the Ends of all the Wisdom and the Understanding in the World : Nor can the Knowledge of God's Providence, or Way of governing the World, nor the Knowledge of any thing, or every thing besides, compare with this, nor contribute near so much (if any thing at all) to true Happiness ; this indeed is Happiness itself ; that which gives us Ease and Peace of Mind, perfect Tranquillity and Rest within, whilst we live here, and fills us full of good Assurances and comfortable Expectations for the future, and frees our Hearts of Fear, that troublesome uneasy Passion ; all which together make up perfect Happiness.

By *the Fear of the Lord*, may be understood the Whole of Religion ; it being usual enough in the Scriptures, to express the whole of our Duty, by some remarkable and necessary Part of it : Or else it may signify that Principle of Fear on which we act, the very Bottom of all Religion, and without which,

there would be no such Thing as Religion in the World: And it is here express'd by *departing from Evil*, which are Terms that signify the same Thing; and so are *Wisdom* and *Understanding*. So that tho' there be two Sentences in the Text, yet they mean but one and the same Thing; for he that feareth the Lord, will unavoidably depart from Evil; and there are Cases wherein Men would not depart from Evil, unless the Fear of God possessed their Minds. And he that feareth the Lord, so as to depart from Evil, or that departeth from Evil, because he feareth God, is a wise and understanding Person: So that turn it on which side we will, the Proposition still comes out the same, *That to be religious, to fear God, to depart from Evil, is a Man's Wisdom and Understanding*. And this will appear more evident from these following Considerations. *First*, It is that in which all Sides and Parties are agreed, and therefore has the fairest Plea to Wisdom that can be. *Secondly*, It is that without which all other Points of what we call Wisdom, will signify little or nothing. *Thirdly*, It is that which of itself, and without the rest, is sufficient to denominate a Man wise and understanding. *Lastly*, It is that alone which God appoints and designs us to be wise in, and therefore, we may be sure, it is the best and truest Wisdom.

First, It is that in which all Sides and Parties are agreed, and therefore has the fairest Plea to Wisdom. All other Parts and Points of Wisdom are controverted; and Men argue with equal Heat, and equal Confidence, and almost equal Reason, one against the other, in defence of what they like themselves, and in subverting what they disapprove in others. That which is accounted Wisdom in one Nation, is accounted Folly in another, and sometimes little less than Madness; and that which has obtain'd in one

Age with all Assurance possible, becomes in the next a Matter of Dispute at least, and appears in another contradictory and absurd; and Men begin to wonder how their Fathers could be so perswaded, how they came to take up with such weak and such ill-grounded Principles, and build such senseless Superstructures on them; how they could miss such plain and reasonable Conclusions as appear at first sight, and dwell so long in Ignorance and Error; nay, and the Opinions that have reign'd for many Ages absolute and uncontroll'd, become at length, by some unlucky tawring Genius rising up in Opposition, the Matter of as much Derision and Contempt, as they were formerly of Wonder and of Veneration. With what an arbitrary Sway did *Aristotle* rule the World for near Two Thousand Years? And all the Schools of *Europe*, *Asia*, and of habitable *Africk*, swore into his Words without Premeditation. They did no more suspect his Skill, than they would have done, had *Jove* himself (according to their Fancies) dictated from Heaven: And yet the Wisdom of this Oracle is now become the Theme of Declamation, and 'tis made a Doubt whether he understood himself or no; and Boys admire at the Succession of his Schools, and at the Number of his Followers; and conclude the World was cheated, or asleep for so many Centuries of Years; and tho' his Philosophy be the greatest, yet is it not the only Instance of Peoples Levity of Judgment, and Inconstancy of Opinion in the Matters of Wisdom. Others have had their Reigns as well as he, and sway'd the Generations that they liv'd in by the Truth, or by the Reputation of their Wisdom and their Learning; and yet we can recover little of these Men beyond their Names, and those we owe too chiefly to the Confutation of their Wisdom and Philosophy by others; who, either by Revenge or Wantonness, have undergone the

same Fortune from succeeding Generations. So that the History of Learning is made up mostly of a continued Series of Confutations of former Opinions, and of new ones substituted in their Rooms, to be in Time and Order served as they were. And so it is in other Matters; the former *Politicks* are now out of Countenance and Credit, and 'tis thought a Wonder how the World was govern'd by them; the former *Customs* appear ridiculous, and improper to their Purpose; and generally speaking, all Particulars in which Men are suppos'd to exercise and shew their Wisdom and Understanding, are either antiquated by Time, and laid aside, as Things useless, or baffled by new Experiments; either one Age confutes the Wisdom of another Age, or one Party controverts the Wisdom of another in the same: And even the Science that pretends to Certainty itself, is subject to this Variation; and Men write Books of *Demonstration* against each other, and shew, (they think) by undeniable Conclusions, the Truth of different and contrariant Propositions. And all these Things have happen'd, not from foolish and perverse Gain-sayers, from Men of little Understanding and great Confidence, from Men that know nothing, and oppose every thing; but from Men of great Abilities, of deep Search and Thought, and equalling, in all Respects, the Parties whose Opinions they dispute against, and whose Judgments they oppose. But it is not so with *fearing God, and departing from Evil*; in this, all Ages, Times, and Places are agreed, all Parties have concurr'd in this, that this is Wisdom, this is Understanding; even they who differ from each other almost in every thing, and one would sometimes think for very differing's sake, yet are agreed in this; even they whose Practice is stark naught, and every way absurd and wicked, yet give their Judgment and their Voice in favour of this Wisdom;

dom; nay, they whose Judgment is as corrupted as their Practice, will give their *loud* Opinion and their publick Voice in behalf of Virtue and Religion, and conclude that it is Wisdom, that they may not be accounted foolish and unreasonable themselves. They will concur in Appearance at least with the rest of Mankind; which shews, that that is the general and prevailing Notion of the World, in which alone it is agreed on all hands; and therefore certainly it has the fairest Plea to be accounted Wisdom, and to be look'd upon as Understanding. If upon proposal of several Opinions of several People, we conclude that to be the likeliest and most probable, in which the most concenter and agree, we were sure to gain the Point in behalf of Virtue and Religion; for they, as yet, have carried it without Contest. This indeed is Matter of Judgment or Opinion only; for if we must conclude by *Practice*, we are as much undone on the other side, and sure to lose the Cause by almost as many Voices; but this is not the way to judge of Wisdom. But yet this Contradiction of Men's Practice, and Defiance bid to their Judgment, make much for the Truth that I am trying to establish; for if neither a continual Habit of ill Practice, nor the Force of ill Examples all around, nor the Profit, nor the Pleasure of Sin, can so far corrupt Men's Judgments, (in the general) as they shall pass them in favour of it; but that notwithstanding all this, and all their other Differences and Disagreements, they concenter all, and terminate all in this, *That to fear the Lord, is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil, is Understanding*: The least we can conclude from hence is, that abstracting from its being told us so in Scripture, it has in Reason and fair Construction, the fullest Plea to pass for Wisdom in the World.

Secondly,

Secondly, It is that, without which all other Points of what we call Wisdom, will signify little or nothing. Not that other Points of Wisdom are not useful and convenient ; for they are more than so, they are absolutely necessary to the conducting us in our Affairs, and to the attaining of those Ends, which we are bound to pursue, *i. e.* such Things as we cannot live without, and which yet we cannot attain, without being wise in many Particulars ; but this is hereby meant, that even the being wise in many, or in all Instances besides, without being virtuous and religious, will signify little or nothing to the making People happy, which yet is the Aim and End of Wisdom : So that nothing is hereby detracted from Wisdom and Understanding in any good and lawful kind, if it be in Conjunction with the Fear of God, and Love of Virtue ; but without this Conjunction, all other Wisdom is unprofitable, and contributes little to the making People happy ; for to be happy, it is necessary to be at ease both in Body and Mind ; in *Body* as far as it is possible, but to be sure in *Mind*. And tho' the being virtuous and religious will no more secure a Man against the natural and certain, or the accidental Evils and Misfortunes of Life ; tho' they will neither make a Man of a stronger Constitution to bear, nor help to prevent most of the Evils that befall the Body, any more than any other particular sort of Wisdom will do ; yet Virtue and Religion will make any or all the evil States and Conditions of Life more easy and supportable, than any other Wisdom of any sort will do. What Ease or Consolation is administred to a Man that lies under the Torture of some sharp and violent Pain, or some vexatious lingering Sicknes, from the Consideration and Remembrance of having read a Thousand Volumes, of knowing all the great remarkable Events of every Nation, of understand-

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ing all their Regiments, their Wisdom, and their Failings? To have searched into the inmost and most secret Recesses of Nature, and have pursued her thro' all Difficulties and all Obscurities; to have sought out Countries unknown, and to have travell'd far and wide throughout the Universe, and have convers'd with them in all their several Languages; to have outdone the greatest Masters in their several Faculties, and have exceeded them in each his Excellency; --- all this affords a Man in his Extremities but little Comfort, no Joy or Satisfaction rises from any such Remembrances or Considerations: And yet these several Attainments are each of them accounted Parts, and considerable Parts of Wisdom. So that the Wisdom of Religion contributes more to the making People happy, than all the Wisdom of the World besides, as it makes the evil States and the calamitous Conditions of Life more easy and supportable than all the rest can do. But then for the other Part of Happiness, which consists in the Peace and Quiet of Mind, and without which Health itself, and every other Blessing, is as nothing; Religion is infinitely superior to all other Wisdom, both as to getting it, and keeping it: For since to be truly happy, it is necessary to be at ease, to be void of all Suspicion, and freed from Fear of Danger of any Evils that may happen after Death, and that nothing can secure Men from these Fears but Virtue and Religion, 'tis evident that they contribute all to the making People truly happy, and that all other Wisdom signifies but little. It is impossible but that all Men should be conscious of their Guilt, conscious of offending God; and they must also know, that Punishment is always due to Guilt, and therefore that they are to look for Punishment: This is an unavoidable Conclusion, and the Mind will make it, in spite of all Opposition. And tho' the Delights

of Sin, and the Variety of Diversions, call Men off from thinking on these Matters seriously, and give them frequent Interruptions, so as to hinder them from making close and serious Applications; yet 'tis not possible for them always to decline these kind of Reflections; they will return, and take their Opportunities, and leave their Sting and Torment in the Mind. This is that which spoils the Happiness of wicked Men, and embitters all their Pleasures; there is something that perpetually haunts them, and pursues them with unwelcome Remembrances; and in the midst of Joy, often dejects the Countenance, and fills the Heart with Sadness: And this, no Wisdom of the Earth can long prevent, or ever remedy; this can be done alone by Innocence and Virtue, and Religion, by the Wisdom that is from above, the Wisdom of *fearing God, and departing from Evil*. This can only keep the Mind at Ease and Quiet, this only frees it from those Jealousies, and sad Distrusts, that naturally attend Men's evil Practices, and from the Dread of Punishment that Reason tells them must be consequent of Guilt. It is too dangerous a Thing to make the Experiment one's self, and therefore let another be advis'd withal that has; let him be ask'd, Whether the Remembrance of having been as wise and cunning in his Dealings, (of having understood the Interest of all Nations, and especially his own, of having read all Books, and travell'd all Countries, and spoken all Languages,) as any one whatever, if any such Remembrances as these afforded any Quiet to his Mind, if they vanquish'd any Fears, or gave him any Hopes, that his Guilt was washed away, that the Punishment of his Iniquity should not overtake him, that he might lie down in the Grave with Peace, and rise again to any Joy or Recompence. If the Reflection on any past Felicities, the Acquisition of a fair Estate,

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the bearing many honourable Offices, the having contracted great Relations, Friendships, and Dependencies, the having liv'd a Life of Mirth and Luxury, and having had the World at Will, has been able to lay the least Rising of his Conscience, to prevent the smallest Pang, or cure the lightest Jealousy and Diffidence of Heart? And yet Men think themselves, and the World accounts them very wise, that have so order'd their Affairs, as to be Masters of these Matters, and attain to these Abilities. They are, in Truth, so far from administering any Ease or Comfort to the Mind in its Distress, that either they are never thought upon at all in such a State or Season, or thought upon with Trouble and Concern: But Virtue and Religion feed the Mind perpetually, and cause it to forget all its Afflictions; the Joy of Innocence raises the Soul above Oppression; and a lively Sense of God's Favour relieves Men under the worst Evils and Distresses of this Life. Now if it be impossible to be truly happy without this Ease and Peace of Mind, and that this Peace is mostly wanted, and most serviceable in the Days of Trial, in Trouble, Sorrow, Need, Sickness, or other Adversity; and that all other Parts and Points of Wisdom, single or combin'd, can in no Measure or Degree afford it, and this Religious Wisdom can, it must needs be evident, that this is that without which all other Parts of Wisdom signify little or nothing, *i. e.* contribute little or nothing to the making People truly happy. And since it is the End and Aim of Wisdom to make Men happy, that which contributes little to the attaining of that End, will hardly deserve so good a Name; at least, it will never come in Competition with that Wisdom which attains its End infallibly, as does the Wisdom of fearing God, and departing from Evil. But,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is that which alone, and of itself, is sufficient to denominate a Man wise and understanding, without any other Qualifications; and that with as much Reason as any other particular Thing does, in that it aims at a certain End, and pursues it by Means proper and convenient; and therein is our Wisdom chiefly seen and exercis'd, in chusing its End, and in proportioning out and pitching upon proper and suitable Means to the attaining it. And this makes a Man a wise Scholar, and a wise Statesman, and a wise Merchant, and a wise Trader; for Wisdom is not tied to any one Thing alone, but is exercis'd in any, and in every one; only according as the End design'd is more or less excellent and desirable, and the Means of compassing it better or worse, more or less fitted to the attaining it, so is the Wisdom to be accounted greater or less: And therefore the Wisdom of fearing God, and departing from Evil, is on the square with any other Part or Point of Wisdom, with respect to pitching on its End and Means; yet because that End is infinitely the best and noblest End, and because those Means are much the surest Means of compassing their End, therefore the Fear of God, and the departing from Evil, is much the best, the surest, and the truest Wisdom. And if any one, altho' but tolerably good End, and good Means pitch'd upon, and compass'd by them, be sufficient of itself to denominate a Man wise and understanding, the pitching on the best of Ends, and best of Means, must certainly be sufficient to the same purpose. Shall a Man be accounted wise, because he knows how many *Kings* govern'd in such a Country, and what great Accidents beset the State under their several Reigns? Or because he can number up the *Consuls* in their Order, and can, it may be, prove in many Sheets, that such a one's Name is mistaken a Syllable more or less, and his

Year assign'd him too soon by three or four? Shall a Man be accounted wise, because he knows what Signification such and such a Word bore in the Days of *Ennius*, and how it chang'd in *Augustus's*, and decay'd in *Trajan's*, and was perfectly lost in *Constantine's*? Shall a Man be almost ador'd, that can tell where the Politicians of old were found defective, and where they acted prudently and safely for the State? Or especially if he himself can foresee a Storm arising, and can prevent its falling there, by otherwise diverting it, or flying from it? Shall a Man be accounted wise, for having by Frugality and Industry, and by indifferent Insight into Business, order'd his Affairs so well, that he is able to live handsomely, and keep a good House, and leave his Children and Dependants well provided for, or having seen them well disposed of in his Life-time; for having amass'd a great Estate, by pleading handsomely, or trading cunningly, or venturing luckily by Sea? Shall a Man, I say, be accounted wise for having succeeded well in any of these Particulars; and not be much more so for having done the best Thing in the World, in the best manner? For having secur'd an Everlasting Interest, by fearing God, and departing from Evil? by making himself as happy here, as Peace of Mind, and a good Conscience, and Security from every Evil and Danger of the other World, and the Hopes of Everlasting Happiness can make him? which is more than any, or all the other Instances of the Wisdom of this World can do. And tho' there are several Exigences when Men may stand in need of, and desire very earnestly to be wise in such or such a particular Instance; yet when Men come to die, when they begin to think of giving an Account to God, how they have pass'd the Time of their sojourning here on Earth, there is then no Want, no Desire of any other sort of Wisdom than that

that of having feared God, and departed from Evil. And yet this is the greatest Exigence, this is the greatest and the truest Trial of the Excellence and Usefulness of any sort of Wisdom that can be: And therefore that which affords the Mind the greatest Comfort, and when it is most wanted, is certainly enough to denominate its Master and Possessor wise and understanding of itself.

But, *Lastly*, It is that alone which God designs and appoints us to be wise and understanding in; and then we may be sure it is the best and truest Wisdom. It is that alone which he commands us to seek and to attain; that alone which he has promis'd to reward; and that alone whose Neglect he will punish, and therefore is the only necessary Wisdom. He hath not any where commanded Men to employ their Time, and Pains, and Study, in the Searches of any sort of Wisdom but this. He hath given them natural Abilities, and bestow'd upon them all the Faculties that are useful and convenient to the attaining any sort of Wisdom; but it is with Design that they should all contribute and be serviceable to this main Point, that they should all promote this heavenly Wisdom of *fearing him, and keeping his Commandments*. He hath no where enjoyn'd Men to be great Scholars, and wise Statesmen, excellent Lawyers, and dextrous Traders, or any other sort of Calling; but he permits them to be all, or any of these; permits them to be wise in their Generations, and approves their Care and Industry, and blesses them in their Studies, and in the Prosecution of these several Ends and Points of Wisdom, provided they will first be wise towards God, and will first seek and secure the Kingdom of Heaven. This is the only Wisdom he *commands*. And this is, *2dly*, The only Wisdom which he will reward.

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He will indeed reward the Effects of any other Wisdom; but then it is so far only as those Effects contribute to, and serve the Ends of this Divine Wisdom. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Statesman*, as far as it administers to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Judge*, as far as it contributes to the doing Justice to all, to the suppressing Injuries, and helping those that suffer wrongfully. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Pleader*, as far as it contributes to the extricating Truth out of the Entanglements of fraudulent and cunning People, and setting it in its proper Light, and restoring to every one his own. He will reward the Wisdom of a *Trader*, as far as it contributes to the employing and relieving the Poor, and the discharging honestly the Duty that he owes both to the Publick, and his private Relations. There is no Point of Wisdom that shall go without Reward, if it be well employ'd; but it is the being well employ'd, *i. e.* to good and righteous Purposes, that can alone challenge this Reward, and to which alone it is engag'd. So that here is no Discouragement to any honest kind of Wisdom, if it will be subservient to the noblest, best, and most superior Wisdom in its several Instances; but still the Reward is to it only as it is a Part of this Religious Wisdom; and as no other Wisdom is to be rewarded, so neither will the want of any other Wisdom but this be *punished*. A Man shall fare never the worse in the other World, for having frequently miscarried in his Business here for want of Understanding; for having little Reach, slow Apprehension; for frequently mistaking, judging amiss, and without Consideration; and for having been a weak Man: But he shall be sorely punish'd for the want of this Religious Wisdom; there will be no Excuse or Plea that shall avail in his behalf;

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this kind of Ignorance will be unpardonable, and this appears most reasonable and just, because it is that of which all the World is capable; it is in every one's Power to be wise towards God, for otherwise it had not been made a general Duty. The Obligation of fearing God, and of departing from Evil, had not been laid on all the World, if all the World had not, by God's Assistance, and their own Endeavours, been able to perform it. It had been hard indeed, if God had made any other kind of Wisdom absolutely necessary to be attained by all the World, and given no other Helps than what we see he ordinarily does. If every Man had been bound under the Penalty of everlasting Death, to be a great *Scholar*, a great *Mathematician*, or read in general *History*, or wise in any one particular Instance; we should have been at a strange loss. If all Men were oblig'd to be rich and wealthy, and to attain to honourable Office and Employment in the Court, the Camp, or City; these would have been extremely hard Terms as the World goes, and Men would have thought themselves unkindly dealt withal in such a Covenant. But that is not the Case with us; we are oblig'd to be wise in Matters only that are within our Compass; we are tied to such a kind of Wisdom as every one is capable of getting, and getting as much as is requir'd of us---- and that is, *fearing God, and departing from Evil*. These are the Considerations that may serve to establish the Truth laid down in the Text by *Job*, repeated again by *David* in the *Psalms*, and dwelt upon perpetually by *Solomon* in all his Writings, whose Authority, in this Point, is superior to all others, in that he would not (tho' divinely taught) believe, without a Thousand vain Experiments, that true Wisdom, and true Happiness, were only to be found in *fearing God, and keeping his Commandments*.

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I will not allow my self to make a tedious Application of these Articles; they are easy, plain, and apply themselves as soon as mention'd. The Purpose of your Meeting is, to do some Credit to *your selves*, and *the Place of your Education*, and to renew those Friendships you contracted in your younger Age. You can do nothing better to the answering all these Ends, than studying to be virtuous and religious Men; this will make you happy your selves, useful to one another, and reflect the greatest Honours on *your School*.

Fame and Praise indeed will follow Learning without Virtue; but Fame and Praise are far from making People happy; they have made some People very miserable, filling their Heads and Hearts with Pride and Vanity, and Self-conceit, and perfectly overset them. They have sometimes undermined the very Ground they stood upon, and caus'd them to neglect those very Parts that rais'd them; by which we have seen Men of the greatest Hopes, end in Contempt and nothing. Nothing but Virtue can make Learning useful, and nothing else can make the Learned happy. See you a Man of great Abilities, whose Mind is not season'd with the Fear of God and good Principles, and you see him in a Disposition and Capacity of being a mischievous and perilous Creature, unfit for private Confidence and Friendship, or for Society and Publick Trust. And as for doing Honour to the Place of your Education, it is impossible, without the being virtuous and religious; that *Second Mother* can neither give it *to*, nor yet receive it *from* degenerate Children. She taught you Languages, and form'd you first to Industry and Diligence, to Application and Attention, to Truth and Justice, to Modesty, Submission and Obedience, and every Virtue proper to your Age; She train'd you in the Fear of God

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early; She made you wait upon him frequently, and bid you do it with all the Decency and Seriousness you could, composing your external Behaviour to those great Notions you would one Day have (She knew) of the great Majesty you were before. She taught you to observe the Discipline and Orders of *the Church*, and to revere that Constitution, that is Rival to the purest Ages of Christianity, and the Reproach to, and immortal Hatred of the present Corruption. And what will She not expect from a Soil so carefully and seasonably cultivated? She will expect all that is wise, and virtuous, and religious. And you will give it Her; you cannot otherwise do

Her the Honour you intend by these Assemblings. The King, whose Birth glorify'd this Day, has in a publick Instrument declar'd, that he design'd his School should be *Magistra omnium Scholarum*. I dare engage one of his Ends was never better answer'd, than it has been within our Memory, still is, and still is like to be; all Things concur to make and keep it flourishing. It has excell'd all that that Prince could ever hope or wish for, in the Point of Learning, already; (he died before the very Dawn of New Learning) but for his other End, good Morals and Religion, his Hope and Wish will never be exceeded; for being a Prince himself of exemplary Piety and Virtue, he aim'd at nothing less than making others so, and so to the last Generation; so that we cannot answer fully to his Aims, without directing all our Studies to the Advancement of God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind, and that is our own Happiness. There is I know not what kind of pleasing Pride, in reading that such a one, famed for his Learning, Wisdom, Piety, and Goodness, was bred in the same Place, where we our selves were bred; it casts, we think, some sort of Honour on us, and breeds a kind of noble

noble Emulation in our Minds; it *should* do so; we owe it to Posterity, to leave them as fine Examples, as we found, and better yet, if it be possible. And I will not so compliment our Predecessors, as not to think the present Age will furnish out a Number that will shine to future Generations, in all great Qualities and good, equal to any that have gone before you. You promise this, and you will make it good, by Learning, Virtue, and good Manners. I will make an end, without assuming any Liberty to direct you what to do, or what to let alone on these Occasions; your Matter lies before you; you will only give me Leave to say, that tho' this Day is given to Joy and Friendship, yet it will need a little Care to let it go no farther. We have begun with God, and must not end in any thing that will displease him: It will not become Men of Education, to let To-Day's Excess furnish out Matter of Repentance for To-Morrow; the Pleasure we propose to find in these Assemblings, would be too dearly paid for at that rate. Nor do I press these Things as Fears or strong Suspicions, but as Cautions, that may not unbecome me in this Place. I should have dismissed you with the Words of *Nehemiah* to the *Jews*----- *Go your way, eat, and drink, and send Portions to them, for whom nothing is prepar'd*;----- but that I am prevented by the good Custom that has constantly prevail'd with you, of making such Collections as become your Qualities, and Liberal Education, and are indeed the Justification, and the Honour of such Meetings. I have, therefore, nothing left to do, but to bless you in the Name of God, and to beseech him to fulfil you with the Riches of his Grace, to make you wise with the Wisdom that is from above, the Wisdom of fearing Him, and keeping his Com-

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mandments; that you may become eminent in all good Qualities, adorn your several Callings and Professions, do Honour to the Place of your Education, be useful to one another, and to all Mankind; and after a Life made happy here by Piety and Virtue, be so for ever, in the World to come.





S E R M O N VII.

P R E A C H ' D

On *September* the 7th, 1704.

B E I N G

The D A Y appointed

F O R T H E

T H A N K S G I V I N G.





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T O T H E
R E A D E R.

TIS somewhat strange, that I, who have been forward enough to submit to the Orders of my Superiors, and comply with the Requests of my Friends, in publishing many Sermons, should now be constrain'd to publish one, against my Will, without Command, and without Request. But so it is, that a certain Person, (unknown to me) who took this Sermon from my Mouth, in Characters, must needs think himself oblig'd to print it, without my Consent; and was resolv'd, it seems, to do so, if I would not take care of it my self. He had, indeed, Honesty enough, to give me Notice (by another Hand) of his Intentions; but not enough to keep him from invading
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his Neighbour's Right ; which I must needs blame in him, tho' I have Reason to think his Purpose proceeded from no ill Principle, or Disrespect to me. 'Tis to this secret Violence I give this Sermon up ; and rather chuse to publish it from the Original, than let it come from a Copy which cannot possibly be perfect ; thinking it much better to prevent Mistakes, than to be at the Pains to correct them afterwards ; tho' I very much dislike the being under a Necessity of doing either.





I KINGS XX. II.

Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his Harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off.

THESE Words contain the wise Reply which the King of *Israel* made to the most insolent and unreasonable Demands of *Benhadad* the King of *Syria*: That Prince had besieged *Samaria*, and reduced it to great Straits; and having sent his Messengers (upon *Abab*'s Desire, we may well presume) to agree upon the Terms either of Peace, or of Surrender, they told him, that his Gold and Silver, his Wives and Children, even the goodliest of them, should be at the Disposal of the King of *Syria*. The King of *Israel* not knowing how to help himself, sent him a civil and submissive Answer, that all he had should be at his Disposal, and signify'd he would become tributary to him, and hold, as it were, all he had from him. This Easiness and tame Submission of *Abab*, did but provoke the *Syrian* King to greater Insolence; and by his next Messenger, he demanded Things abundantly more extravagant and hard than at first. Then, it seems, he would not be content with the *King*'s Treasure, but would send his Servants, and rifle the whole *City* of whatever he found should please him in it. Upon this, *Abab* advises with his Elders and Counsellors (who were now concern'd as much as he) what to do in this Extremity; for now 'twas plain, the *Syrian*

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rian fought not for Sovereignty alone, but intended their utter Ruin and Destruction. His Council advis'd him unanimously not to hearken to any such unreasonable, extravagant Demands, but rather venture all that could happen, since worse than what was asked could hardly happen to them. Upon which Advice, the King takes Heart, and sends the Syrian word, that what he had first engaged for, he would still make good, but he could go no farther. Upon which *Benhadad* sent again to him this proud imperious Menace,---- *The Gods do so to me, and more also, if the Dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls, for all the People that follow me.* He threatens him, that tho' *Samaria* were a large City, yet should it not be able to afford a handful of Dust to every one of his Soldiers, he would bring so many up against him. To which the King of *Israel* answers only in this wise Maxim, or Proverbial Speech, --- *Tell him, I say, Let not him that girdeth on his Harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off.* Tell him from me, the Issue of War is very uncertain; 'tis time enough to boast, when that appears successful: There's many a one girds on his Armour in great Gaiety and Pride, that has it pull'd off by his Enemy to make a Trophy of. 'Tis good to kill the Beast, before we part his Skin; the Booty must be taken long before it is divided; bid him be wise, and see the End of Things, before he threaten such Destruction; he that puts off his Harness, is assur'd of Victory, whilst he who puts it on, has many Things to fear. This is the Meaning of the King of *Israel's* Answer; and in it, as it was occasion'd, there are these Things observable to our Advantage. *First*, That great Power and Command makes Men usually insolent in their Behaviour, boundless in their Desires, and very extravagant in their Demands. But, *Secondly*, That a wise Man, who seriously considers

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what the Event of Things may easily be, by the great Variety of Accidents not foreseen, or not to be prevented, will moderate his Desires, pursue Ends that are reasonable, and live in Justice, whatever Hopes of Success his present Advantages may give him.

First, Great Power and Command makes Men usually insolent in their Behaviour, unreasonable in their Desires, and extravagant in their Demands. All Men have it in their Will to govern, and be absolute; few consider the true Use of Power, or use it rightly when they have it. The true End of Power, is to obtain their Will; but then their Will is evermore to intend some general good, or something that is good for themselves, but by no means inconsistent with the general one: And therefore, when more (who should be benefited) are prejudic'd by any particular Exercise of Power, than are benefited by it, 'tis manifest that Power is there abused. There's no Man living can be vested with a rightful Power of doing Injury and Mischief; 'tis contrary to the very End and Nature of it; for *all Power is of God*, and he himself has none of doing wrong. The most arbitrary Prince in the World, is as unjust when he exercises his Power to the Prejudice of his Subjects, as the most limited one, when he transgresses express Laws made for their Security: For the good of Subjects is as much intended and supposed in arbitrary, as in limited Governments; only the Means of Redress are not the same, but differ according to their Constitutions. The Subjects have tied themselves not to withstand the Power that is certainly exercised to their Mischief in one case; but the Prince is nevertheless faulty, tho' unaccountable: The End of Government, is the Good of Mankind, and that is the Obligation of all Rulers; and whoever discharges not that, offends against both God and Man,

Man, tho' God alone may punish him. An Exemption from Punishment, does not alter the Nature of Offences. A Prince may be as great a Tyrant in *Turky* as in *England*, tho' the one governs by his Will, and the other by known Laws; because the End of both Governments is the same, namely, *their Good*: And Laws are but as so many particular Determinations of People, to procure the Publick Good by such and such Means; which, in arbitrary Governments, is left to the Will of their Princes, and whom they please to use. So that 'tis manifest, there neither is, nor can be, any Power committed to any Man, but what is intended for the Publick Good, and supposes that will follow.

But be the End of Power what it will, and never so good, we see by Observation and Experience, the more uncontroul'd Power any Prince has, the more Mischief he generally does with it; the worse he uses his own People, the readier he is to injure and insult his Neighbours: So that the *Abuse* of Power is almost as natural as the *Desire* of it; there being very few that look beyond themselves, and the Gratification of their own Desires; accounting that to be the Publick Good which they aim at, and own publicly, tho' never so destructive of it.

But the Mischief rests not at home; 'twere well enough if they alone, who are unhappily subjected to this lawless Government, were miserable by themselves, and wore the Bonds they tamely chose to put upon their own Arms: But it spreads like Infection, and is the Cause of all its Neighbours Mischiefs; *it makes War cheap*, which is the Parent of all Evils. 'Tis in the Hands of a Man that is cholerick, proud, and haughty, covetous, or ambitious, under the Dominion of one, or many, foolish or wicked Passions; ---- 'tis in this Man's Hands to raise Armies, and maintain them as long as he pleases;

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'tis in his Power to oppress, pillage, and rob his own Subjects, in order to the oppressing, pillaging, and ruining of those, whom either his vain Ambition, Cruelty, or Revenge, has made him *call* his Enemies. This is one of the saddest Effects of Arbitrary Power, that *it makes War cheap*, and resolves it easily into the Determination of every Passion a weak or wicked Prince may be subject to; it puts it into his Power to disturb his own Country, and every one's else besides; for if he were not absolute at Home, he could do no great Mischief Abroad. It is not certain, that the growing absolute of one Prince, would justify another Prince's making War upon him to prevent it; but 'tis certain that Nine in Ten of the Occasions of Princes warring with one another, are not so truly reasonable as this. 'Tis more suspicious, and more hazardous, than building either new Forts, or Store of new Ships, or raising new Armies; he has it in his Power to do what Mischief a whole Nation is capable of doing.

And this is one of the Excellencies of our own Government, that tho' for wise and good Reasons, the Power of making War and Peace is put into *our Prince's Hands*; yet they can neither be lasting, nor of great Moment, unless the Wisdom of our Nation find them useful and necessary; by which Means, we are neither arbitrarily to be oppress'd at Home, nor easily brought to make unjust Wars Abroad, to support Ambition, Vain-glory, Revenge, or Cruelty; none of which Mischiefs are to be avoided under Arbitrary Governments, where the Will of one determines all.

There is nothing to be said to all this, but that Arbitrary Princes have Reason and Understanding like other Men, and that it is their Interest to have their Subjects rich, and to spare their Lives; and therefore, that without Necessity, they will neither
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deprive them of their Wealth, nor throw away their Lives cheaply. And to this, the Experience of the whole World to the contrary, opposes itself; there being nothing plainer, than that they are extravagantly lavish both of the Lives and Fortunes of their Subjects. They never care to have their People rich, (as Riches make them happy, and live easily) but that *they* may be enriched with their Spoils, whenever there is occasion. And in all such Countries, 'tis almost as dangerous to be very rich, as to practise against the Government, and frequently as fatal; it has cost many a Man his Life in the *East*. And let a Man in *France*, that neither retains to *Court* or *Camp*, be known to be wealthy, and he shall quickly be constrained either to lend, or give, till he be brought to the size of other People. Whereas with *Us*, a Man may be known to abound in Money, Goods, and Estate, to the greatest degree, and fare no worse than the poorest Man in all the Neighbourhood, in his Proportion: We have no such thing as giving or lending *against our Will*, which is a great, but just piece of Liberty. In a word, all the Advantages of Arbitrary Government, may be numbred up in a short Line; but all the World can scarcely hold its Mischiefs. 'Tis this that impoverishes its own Country, and troubles the Peace of its Neighbours; to this we owe so many unjust Invasions, Desolations of Kingdoms, and all the Barbarities of War, that fill the World with so much Misery and Mischief.

When a Prince finds himself oblig'd (as in all limited mixt Governments it is) to live by the Rules of Honour and true Justice, to advise with Men disinterested, and dispassionate, in all Affairs of Moment, and tied to govern by known Laws (the happiest Force a Man can possibly be under) he quickly sees his Interest lies at home, to make himself and People happy; and is under no Temptation of

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unnecessary Wars, either to employ his bold and active Spirits that might otherwise disturb his Reign, or turn his Subjects Eyes from marking his Mis-carriages at Home ; for he who governs righteously and legally, has nothing to fear from his People. But when a Prince is entirely at Liberty, consults his own Inclinations only, or with such Counsellors alone as know them well, but dare not disapprove them ; has no regard to Justice or Honour, but thinks himself the Rule and Standard of both, and sees his Subjects Lives and Fortunes at his Foot---- every Passion this Man has, ('tis evident) may stand for Reason, raise Taxes, and send out Armies, when and where-ever those blind Guides direct them.

I account my self never out of the way, when I am speaking against a Government that is only to be trusted in the Hands of God Almighty, whose infinite Goodness, unerring Justice, and all-seeing Wisdom, make him incapable of injuring any of his Creatures ; but which, in Man's Hands, is fruitful of a Million of Disorders, Mischiefs, and all sort of Evils ; and which has troubled us, and all *Europe*, for a great while ; and hath, at the bottom, occasion'd all the Expence of Treasure and Blood we have been at for more than Forty Years, either in assisting our Neighbours, or defending our selves.

Whilst *France* was govern'd by its Kings and Parliaments (as ours) it was as quiet and inoffensive a Neighbour as any other ; but when it lost its Liberties, and came entirely into the Disposal of its Princes, it became just as troublesome and vexatious to its Neighbours, as the Humour of its Princes pleased to make it ; and has ever since been instrumental only to Blood and Rapine ; a formidable Power, sent out to execute the Orders of whatever evil Passion governs its Prince ; sometimes to conquer Countries, to which he vow'd with all Solemn-

nity before God in Heaven, and God (he thought) upon the Altar; before all Saints, and in the Face of all the Courts of Justice, that he would make no Claim, but renounced all Right he ever might have had to them; and sometimes to chastise a whole offenceless Country for some imaginary Affront, or for retarding him in his *Race of Glory*; sometimes to ruin more than a Million of his own People, because they could not see with his Eyes, and understand with his Understanding, in Matters of everlasting Consequence, and where the Example of all the Kings of the World will justify no Man's Error. These, and all other his Attempts, as well as that at present, are owing purely to that boundless Power he finds he exercises safely among his own People; for were the Government lodg'd in any other Hands that were to determine these great Matters, it were utterly impossible that so much Misery should be endured at Home, or so much Mischief done Abroad. No Ten wise Men in all that Kingdom, were they at their Liberty, would either advise, or assist such Enterprizes, as empty all their Treasures, and destroy the Lives of so many good Subjects continually, for nothing but to gratify the Ambition, or the Revenge of their Monarch; 'tis all the Effect of arbitrary, uncontroul'd Power, unhappily plac'd in the Hands of a vain Man, and nourish'd by a Train of unaccountable Successes. This is the Parent of that Insolence with which he treats the World; of those extravagant Demands he makes; and of those unbounded Desires with which he pursues the Enlargement of his Dominion. And this I was led to speak to, from the Example of that haughty and vain-glorious Prince concern'd in the Text, whose Power exalted him to Insolence and Madness; and made him demand Submission so extravagant and senseless, as turn'd to his Destruction: And I the

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rather chose to insist upon the Mischiefs of this sort of Government, that we might see, and better taste the Happiness of *our own*, and be more thankful to God for it, and the more careful to preserve it in that due Temperament in which it stands; without endeavouring either to exalt, or to abase the Princely Power, by which our Governour may neither be (according to the *Fable*) a *Stork*, nor yet a *Log*, *i. e.* may neither be useless by too little Power, nor mischievous by too much; the Extream into which almost all the Kingdoms of *Europe* have fallen, besides our selves.

Let us now see, in the *Second Place*, to the other Thing, which is so observable from the History, and the Answer which the King of *Israel* made to *Ben-hadad*; and that is, That a wise Man who seriously considers what the Event of Things may easily be, by the great Variety of Accidents, not foreseen, or not to be prevented, will moderate his Desires, pursue Ends that are reasonable, and live in Justice, whatever Hopes his Advantages may at present give him.

They who have liv'd in the World to any Years of Observation, must needs perceive, (and feel in part) that all Things in it are subject to Vicissitude and Change; that there is such Uncertainty in them, that one can intend and design nothing future, without foreseeing a great many Accidents that may defeat our Expectation, and apprehending many more; that as soon as we have formed any Project, tho' never so just and honest, our very next Thought is employ'd, in trying to prevent a Disappointment; and that no Care, no Wisdom is sufficient to secure our End, but there will arise more than a Probability of our miscarrying: And therefore, that all a Man can do in this World, is, to intend Things just and

fitting, honest, and creditable, and to pitch on Means that are in Reason right and proper, and leave the Issue in the Hands of God ; for, what it shall be, no Man living can answer. We must indeed intend a certain Issue, and reasonable Agents cannot well do otherwise ; but a certain Issue is not in our Power ; we are therefore only to take care, that we neither pitch upon such an *End*, nor try to compass it by such *Means*, as, upon a Disappointment, will either give us Shame or Grief ; our *Virtue* shall not be question'd for our *Design*, nor our *Discretion* for the *Ways* we took to bring it about. This is all we have to do, and all that we can do ; and whoever does not this, will be always blamed both by himself, and all others.

The only Temptation to forego this cautious, wise, and just way of proceeding, is, that Men now and then succeed in their most unjust Enterprizes, and then neither value nor think of Accidents, Uncertainties, or Change, or Chance : This is sure, but this is not Ground enough for any wise Man's Venture. A Man must take the whole of Things together, to measure his Wisdom or Happiness by ; a Man may draw blindfold, the Lot he would have chosen with both his Eyes and Understanding ; but then he owes it to Chance, and values not his Wisdom or Choice in the Purchase, and knows, moreover, that a Lottery is one of the unlikeliest Ways in the World of growing rich.

Success indeed in one bad Enterprize, is a Temptation to another ; but a *Temptation* is seldom a good *Reason*, especially if that Success itself was accidental, as it usually is ; and I am now speaking of what a Man should do, who reasons and considers ; and there, I say, that nothing but what is just and right, should be depended on ; because there are more Disappointments than Successes happen to any Man, and

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and every Man is to provide for what is most likely to befall him.

Now, as War is one of the most complicated Affairs in the World, and takes in the Consideration of an Infinity of Particulars, and consequently must depend upon numberless Uncertainties and Accidents; so it ought to be undertaken with the greatest Deliberation, and manag'd with the greatest Circumspection; its Successes are to be used with the greatest Moderation and Humanity; its Losses born with the greatest Fortitude and Patience.

Fortune, that govern'd all, according to the Heathens, was represented *blind*; and *Victory* had *Wings*; and tho' some Generals chain'd her to their Chariots, yet this was in Picture only, and done with great Vanity; for she was never, willing or unwilling, steadfast always to any one Side, but fluttered up and down with great Uncertainty. We Christians know of no such Things as *Chance* and *Fortune*; but know that God above governs the World, and disposes well of all Events: But Providence, *i. e.* his way of ordering and disposing them, seems to us so varying and uncertain, *i. e.* we know so little of it, that for want of a more proper Name, we call it *Chance* and *Fortune*; but we only mean thereby, to set forth our own Ignorance of God's Disposal of Affairs. But, however, the same Uncertainty and Instability of all Things appearing by the Events to us, as did to them, we are to make the same use that they intended by those Emblems; which was, That People should neither wax insolent under Success, nor yet despair under Loss and Disappointment, since all Things were so subject to change, and might consequently change from bad to good, as from good to bad. It was a very wise Saying, and frequently in the Mouth of our late King, *That Campaigns do not always end as they begin.* The Observation of which

kept him still in good Temper, neither haughty nor desponding; neither apt to refuse good Terms, nor ask unreasonable ones: A thing so common, that one may say, Success has hurt more than it has profited, by elating so the Mind, that it has overlook'd all Reason; and by extravagant Demands, has lost its true Advantages, and thrown the Adversary upon other Measures: For he who demands Things unreasonable, teaches Men to deny what might be fit to grant; as he who denies Things reasonable, teaches Men to ask Things that were not so before. We need not go out of our own Memory for Examples of both these kinds.

The *Turks*, not many Years ago, upon the great Successes of the *German* Emperor, proffered such Terms of Peace as were exceeding honourable and advantageous to the Christians; but Success had so exalted them, that they would none of them, but on Conditions that could not, they knew, be complied with: The following Campaigns taught them better, and they were glad of Peace upon much worse Terms, the Loss of a very great City, and a great Tract of Country round it, which they might otherwise have kept. 'Tis fit that every thing insulating and unreasonable should be so serv'd, and that they who are blinded by their good Fortune, should also be mislead by her; and taught to be more wise and moderate by Loss, and by Repentance. He who asks an unreasonable Rent (to mix small Things with great) for his House, will have it, you know, stand so much longer empty, which usually brings the Matter, tho' not the Man, to Reason.

The other Instance is of a Prince, with whom we are just now concern'd, who having Offers made both safe, and honourable, and advantageous, is, by refusing them, to all Appearance ruin'd, at least for some Years; and (which is worse by a great deal

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has already ruin'd most of his People and Country; tho' I confess, such strange Oversight look rather like just *Infatuations*; than the Effects of bare Inconsiderateness; for what can be more reasonable, than that they who prefer a private Humour, or a private Interest, to the publick Good of their Country, should suffer all Extremities; but, if it could be, by themselves? Tho' now, unhappily, the Country suffers more than he; which, were it possible to be avoided, should. But that's the Unhappiness of all Relations, they must be punish'd for another's sake, in hopes that the Concern for them, will restrain Men from such Actions as will bring Mischief (they know) on those whom they are bound to love, and look after, and preserve from all Evil; and the Relation betwixt a Prince and his Country, being the same with that of Husband and Wife, or Father and Children, the one is intended to be punish'd in the Afflictions of the other. But (to return) both these Princes, the one in making extravagant Demands, the other in refusing very fair and reasonable ones, seem to have little thought upon, or to have quite forgotten the Uncertainties of War, and the many little Accidents on which the Success of Battels depend.

And thus it was with *Benhadad*, the King of Syria; he had reduc'd the King of *Israel* to Extremity, and offered him then very hard Terms, which yet were accepted; but *then* his Insolence and Madnes would impose much harder, and that reduced him to Despair; and that Despair excited more Courage and Resolution, than any thing reasonable could do; and God came in, and interpos'd, and curb'd the Extravagance of that haughty Prince, and brought him to intercede with the despis'd Adversary, even for *his Life*. And then, I suppose, he saw the Wisdom of King *Abab's* Caution, *Let not him that*

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girdeth on his Armour, boast himself as he who putteth it off. A great many Accidents happen betwixt the girding on, and the putting off a Man's Armour; sometimes he is forc'd to fly away with it; sometimes he is wounded in it; sometimes he is stripp'd of it whilst living; and sometimes dead, and never sees it put off. This is but the Figure, but the Meaning in general is, (as we have seen) that they who begin War, know not where it will end, and therefore should be cautious how they enter, and know when to put up the Sword in time, and not be betray'd by a little Success, to carry Things on unreasonably.

We have seen, in our Time, (we have seen indeed nothing else but) a great King's Ambition troubling the Peace of all the World, for more than forty Years; tempted by a most disastrous Conjunction of weak, voluptuous, and ill-govern'd Princes, his Contemporaries, to raise what Armies, and to send them where-ever he pleas'd; invading, wasting, and insulting all who were unhappily within his Reach; insomuch that the whole Christian World, who had for five or six hundred Years reckon'd, and call'd the *Turk* the *Common Enemy*, have of long time, with one consent, translated that abhorr'd Title to *Him*. And after all, what are the Fruits of this Perfidy and Violence? So ill a Fame was never gotten for so small Advantages. What are the Accessions made to *France*, that are equal to such an immense Treasure, and such a Multitude of his Subjects Lives, as they have cost him? I think no History can readily afford us such another Instance; That a Prince who was absolute Master of one of the finest Kingdoms in the Earth, and had a People so active, and so slavishly submissive to all his Orders; who hath rais'd such numerous Armies, which have fought so many Battels, taken so many Towns, and wasted so many

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many Countries, should at last have so little to shew for it: He has, like Creatures of voracious Appetite, but ill Digestion, swallow'd down much, but been constrain'd to give it up again. The *Emperor*, with all his Poverty and Weakness, hath kept five times more Country and Advantages than he, within the Compass of twenty Years; and might have had much more, had he (as I observ'd before) but been more reasonable in his Demands; and might moreover have had what he has, without any Danger or Disturbance, had he but learn'd that Lesson that is, it seems, so hard for Princes to learn, (tho' Reason, Interest, and Conscience, teach them nothing else) namely, to love his People, and leave them to their just and ancient Liberties. I cannot think, but that both Friends and Enemies are equally to be blamed, whose Subjects live miserably; and I see an Instance also here, of what I have before remark'd, that they who with-hold and deny Things reasonable, put People in the way of asking Things unreasonable; which seems at present the Case of the *Hungarians*, with respect to their Sovereign. But this a little by the way; when I was seeking what were the visible Fruits of such a long continued Violence of War, as *France* hath exercised on all her Neighbours; and he who looks into a *Map*, may quickly see that every Foot of Ground hath cost him most extravagantly dear; it hath cost him the Impoverishment of his own Kingdom, as well by the Extirpation of a Million at least of his Protestant Subjects, as by the Death of some Hundreds of Thousands of his Soldiers; and hath raised him up the Enmity and Hatred of all the World about him; and *the End is not yet*: He hath not yet put off his Armour, he hath occasion still to think of *Ahab's* Maxim in the Text; his Lands require its Tillers; his Vines their Pruners; and his Trade calls for those labour-

labouring Hands that are now wasting in unprofitable and destructive Wars.

Let them call this Country *Happy*, and this Government *Good*, who measure out a Countries Happiness by the Splendor of a luxurious Court, the Gliftrings of the Soldiery, and the Equipage of some great State-Officers, who are, it may be, not one to five Thousand of those who live most miserably and poorly. Strange Happiness to *us*, who think a Kingdom's Happiness consists in the Happiness of Prince and People both together.

This great Oppressor both of his own, and other People, has at length, it seems, obtain'd the End he always sought for, the Possession of the *Spanish Government*. But is that peaceable, or like to be so? Has it not rais'd him such an Opposition, that he knows not what to do withal? Were it, in Truth, as much the Interest of the World, to be reveng'd on *Spain*, for its so pitiful and vile Submission to its Yoak, as it is to secure itself against the Tyranny of *France*, nothing could be better done, than leaving that wretched People to enjoy their *New Masters*; but as it is, Interest, Honour, and Security of themselves, have rais'd him as many Enemies as the Conjunction of those two Monarchies can make; and what will be the Issue, no Man living can certainly tell; but in all likelihood, this unreasonable Grasp, which fills his Hands too full, will make his Hold less sure by a great deal; so that that which he thinks the Crown of all his Labour, is likely enough to weigh him down, and to compleat his Ruin. And the great Success with which it hath pleas'd God to bless his Enemies, (and which occasions our assembling here at this time) is a most promising Presage, that the Day of his Humiliation is at hand: He never had so much to do, with so little Ability of doing it, since he began to trouble *Eu-*

rose;

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rope; nor has he ever received so great a Blow as now, when he is less than ever able to bear it. If that good Spirit, Unity, and Conduct, that has lately appear'd, go on with us a little farther, the oldest of us all may live to see the Foundations of such a Peace and Security laid, that it shall not be in the Power of this ambitious Prince to disturb it.

He hath lost (by utterly undoing him) the only Prince that could be brought to fight under his Banners; his Friendship is as fatal as his Enmity; and that, I hope, will be a lasting Fruit of this great Victory, that all the Princes of the World will open their Eyes upon the sad Examples his destructive Alliance has lately made, and let him fight his unjust Battels by himself. One may very well apply on this occasion, the Message of the King of *Assyria* to the King of *Judah*, to those undone Princes, who have unhappily joyn'd Hands with, and depended on the Power of *France*. *What Confidence is this wherein thou trustest? Thou sayest (but they are but vain Words) I have Counsel and Strength for the War. Now on whom dost thou trust? Behold thou trustest upon the Staff of this bruised Reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a Man lean, it will go into his Hand, and pierce it; so is Pharaoh, King of Egypt, to all that trust on him.* I believe it is as plain to all considering People, that he was the Ruin of our late unhappy King, as it is visible to Men that have their Senses, that he has now ruin'd the Two *Electoral Brothers*, tho' not by the same Methods, yet by the Consequences of a like Alliance, Conjunction and Friendship with him.

Some are dazzled with the Lustre of that Power that ruling by an Army gives, and like the Example strangely; others are caught by the Profusion of that Wealth that arbitrary Princes only can afford, because they feel not, or regard not the Misery of their People,
whose

whose Lives and Labours must supply that Bounty. But such Examples should, methinks, have some *Instruction* also in them; and the Conclusion make the last Impression on the Mind, and what that is, the whole World sees, and wonders at: *Three Examples* in one Reign, one may well hope, will be all.

If I have shewn, that arbitrary Power has been the cursed Root, from whence most of the Wars that have afflicted *Europe* during our Time, have sprung; by enabling a Prince of unmeasurable Ambition, to raise what Armies he thought fit, and to maintain them, by laying what exorbitant Taxes he thought fit upon his own People, to invade what Countries he pleas'd, to desolate what Provinces, to sack what Cities, to insult what States, his Vain-glory or Revenge suggested to him, and to make what high, extravagant Demands he would; and that by a natural sort of Justice, all this has turn'd to Disadvantage, disabled his own People from affording the Assistance he at last wanted, and arm'd the mightiest Powers of *Europe* against him, who have already broken his greatest Strength to pieces, and are in the way of gathering more and more Fruits of this great Victory: If I have done this, I have done what I principally intended, namely, proved to you, that nothing but Justice, Honesty, and true Honour, can be lastingly depended on; that nothing besides can make a Victory relish well, or bear Defeats and Disappointments; and the same that Justice and true Honour are to *Kingdoms* and great *States*, are Virtue, Honesty, and Fair-dealing, to *private People*. The Power of doing Mischief, and the Opportunities of gaining by Injustice, are but so many insidious Ways, by which vain Men are tempted to Destruction; but he that is wise and honest, overlooks them all, and will consider what may happen; not trusting to Success, but to the End he aims at, and to the Means

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Means he pitches on, whatever be the Issue ; for the Issue makes neither Man nor Cause the better, but only happier, or unhappier, with respect to the Affairs of this World. And I shall not think I have quite forgotten the Business of this Day, if I have shewed you, by the way, the Occasion of this War, the Grounds of our Confederacy, the Importance of this Victory, and the great Likelihood of our gathering more and more Fruits from it ; for by these Means, you will have seen what Reason we have to give God Thanks for it : And I am the less concern'd, because we are only to do this Day, by Authority, in Publick, with one Consent, what I dare say every good *Englishman* hath done already in his Heart over and over by himself of his own accord, namely, returned God Thanks for the great Success he hath been pleased to give us.

We have neither Friend nor Enemy *Abroad*, that will once imagine any *Englishman*, of the *Reformed Religion*, can be displeased at such a Victory ; and they would wonder much, if we at *Home* should let them know we *had*, especially when King *William* had no hand in it ; for that, perhaps, with them, might have disturb'd the Joy of any Triumph.

They are indeed very unfortunate, who mourn on these Occasions, which promise an Establishment to the Religion of the Country, the Securities of our Laws and Liberties under the best of Constitutions, which lay Foundations of a lasting Peace, that we may reap the Fruits of a wise and righteous Administration, under the happy Government of a most excellent, and virtuous, and religious Princess : That have so gloriously maintain'd the Honour of the *English* Arms, discover'd to new, and as it were, unknown Countries, such Courage and such Conduct in our General, Officers, and Soldiers ; and so good Discipline withal, that they were both amaz'd and
pleas'd

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pleas'd, and redeem'd at the same time. These Things merit the best Sacrifice that we can offer up of Praise and Thanksgiving, not only solemn, but sincere ; for we have truly never had a greater nor more just Occasion in our Memory.

And as we owe to him *Praise* for these, and all his other Mercies, so let us *pray* him, of his Goodness, still to have our *Queen* under his gracious Favour and Protection ; that her Reign may be a long and lasting Blessing to these Nations ; to preserve for hers, and all our sakes, our *General* wise, and brave, and fortunate ; our *Officers* as valiant and intrepid ; and our *Soldiers* as courageous and obedient, as they have hitherto been ; and bring them home in Honour and in Safety to their Native Country, there to receive the Blessings and Rewards of such as venture Life, and all they have, in the Defence of their Religion and their Nation.





S E R M O N VIII.

Preach'd before

H E R M A J E S T Y

A T

St. J A M E S's

On W E D N E S D A Y, *April 4.* 1705.

DEUTERONOMY XX. I.

When thou goest out to Battel against thine Enemies, and seest Horses and Chariots, and a People more than thou, be not afraid of them; for the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt.

IN speaking to these Words, we have to consider,
First, The Command or Counsel here given to the Jews, Not to be afraid of the Horses, Chariots,
 3 and

and superior Number of their Enemies, when they went out to fight. *Secondly*, The Reason here assign'd, *For the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt.* And *Thirdly*, To see how this Advice is applicable to us as Christians.

First, Of the Command or Counsel here given *When thou goest out to Battel against thine Enemies and seest Horses and Chariots, and a People more than thou, be not afraid of them.* If there were any Dispute of the Lawfulness of Wars invasive and offensive, where there is equal Reason and Necessity, as of defensive ones, these Words would conclude much in their Favour; for, *going out to Battel against their Enemies*, looks as if they rather went to *prevent* Invasion, than to *repel* it: But since nobody doubts the Justifiableness of the *Jewish* Wars, we have only to see to the Counsel here given, not to fear Horses, Chariots, or superior Numbers; for all these Things are naturally dreadful.

The *Jewish* Army consisted wholly of Infantry or Foot, and for a great while they had no Horse at all; the Country it seems bred none, and they were forbid to go down to *Egypt* to provide themselves of any. *Egypt* was famous for furnishing Horse; and whether it were, that the *Jews* were forbid to go to *Egypt*, for fear their Commerce with that idolatrous Country should endanger their Manners, and cause them to incline to the Worship of many Gods, as the rest of the Nations did, and to which they were strangely prone on all Occasions; or whether it were, that the *Jews* should always remember the Deliverance God had wrought for them, in bringing them out of *Egypt*, with a high Hand, and stretched out Arm, notwithstanding the infinite Multitude of Horsemen and Chariots with which their Enemies pursued

pursued them to the *Red Sea* ; whether this, or any
 undiscover'd Reason stood in the way, 'tis manifest
 the *Jewish* Army had no Horse, and consequently
 no Chariots of War, as other People had, --- at least
 for a great while, even to the Days of King *David*.
 It seems, indeed, as if God intended to distinguish
 the *Jewish* Armies from all other Armies, as well as
 the People from other People, in most Particulars ;
 and would let both them, and all the World per-
 ceive, that they were not to be defended by the usual
 Means, but by his Power alone, who had brought
 them out of *Egypt* in so strange a manner. And there-
 fore, when that perverse People grew weary of God's
 Government, and desired a King, and to be govern'd
 like the Heathens round them, God ordered *Samuel*
 to tell them, that among other Instances of the hard
 Government their Prince would set up, *He would*
take their Sons, and appoint them for himself, for his
Chariots, and to be his Horsemen, 1 Sam. viii. 11.
 which thing they also did ; so that in time, *Chariots*
and Horsemen came in use among them, and signify'd
 the Strength and Defence of a Kingdom among the
Jews, as well as other People : And therefore the
 King calls the dying Prophet, *My Father, my Fa-*
ther, the Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen there-
of, 2 Kings ii. 12. i. e. their Strength and their Se-
 curity. But it was not thus from the beginning ;
 they had neither Horse, nor Chariot ; which being
 judg'd so serviceable in War, as appear'd by their
 general use, no wonder if they struck Terror into the
 Minds of those who either wanted them, or were
 forbidden to use them. This may be an Account
 why the *Jews* are bid in particular not to be afraid of
 their Enemies *Horse and Chariots* ; but in the gene-
 ral, those Words do only signify the Warlike Provi-
 sions of any kind, made use of by their Enemies
 against them. And so we are to understand

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Psal.

Psal. xx. 7. Some put their Trust in Chariots, and some in Horses, but we will remember the Name of the Lord our God. This appears also, from their being commanded not to be afraid of a superior Number; *When thou seest a People more than thou, be not afraid of them.* So that the *Jews* are counselled here, that when they went out to fight, and saw their Enemies superior in Provision, Strength, and Number, they should not be afraid of them.

But how is this to be avoided, since these Advantages will naturally, and very reasonably cause Fear, even in the wisest and the strongest Hearts? The Chances (as they call them) of War are so many, and the Turns so strange and sudden, that even when all things are more than equal on their Side; yet can neither the oldest, the bravest, nor the most experienc'd Warriours, forbear fearing for the Event. There must therefore be something particular in the Reason assign'd, to make it possible for the *Jews* to comply with such a Command as not to fear their Enemies, with such Advantages upon their Side.

And so, in the *Second Place*, there was; the Reason carries great Force with it, and seems to be able to bear down all before it, --- *For the Lord thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the Land of Egypt.* The Lord God, in Opposition to the Gods of the Nations round, which were but Idols, and could neither help themselves, nor others; and the Lord *thy God*, as in Covenant with them, and distinguishing them from the rest of the World, by most peculiar Favours and Blessings bestowed upon them, and known especially to them, and all the Nations round, by having brought them up, *out of the Land of Egypt*, in a manner the most glorious and astonishing, and in all its Circumstances remarkably memorable to all Posterity. They had

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therefore on their Side One to depend upon, who not only *could*, but who *had already* done the greatest Things for them; they did not only know He was All-powerful, but had lately seen Him exercise that Heavenly Power on their behalf on all Occasions: They had seen that *both the Chariot and Horse were fallen*; and that nothing could prevail against those whom God would help, but that whom he blessed, *were*, and *must* be blessed. This therefore was the Reason why they were not to be afraid of their Enemies, altho' so strong and well provided; they had *the Lord for their God*, one who was Almighty in Power, and whose Goodness they had long experienc'd, both they and their Fathers; who had brought them up out of *Egypt*, and who had covenanted to bless them in all their righteous Undertakings, and prosper all their righteous Wars against their Enemies, provided they kept the Law that he gave them, and serv'd no other Gods but him. Upon these Conditions, God would be their God, and they should be his People; and whilst they observ'd these, they were sure of Success; no Sword, no Weapon, that was form'd against them, could prevail; they needed not to be afraid of either Horses, Chariots, or *a People more than they*. This was God's Conduct with respect to his People *Israel*; and therefore it required but an Act of the easiest Faith imaginable, to go out against their Enemies in righteous Wars, undertaken by his Command or Approbation, with all the Confidence possible, and full Assurance of Success; they knew their Captain was Almighty, *the Lord of Hosts*; they knew it was as easy for him to save by few, as many; they had experienc'd this, in his delivering them from a People infinitely more than they, and well provided with Horses and Chariots, whom they had seen troubled from Heaven, and overthrown in the *Red Sea*: And they had the same Promise of

Success, by the same Assistance, in all their righteous Undertakings. Such Counsel, therefore, or Command, as this in the Text, *Not to fear Horses and Chariots, or a People more than they*, might very well be complied with, by considering, faithful People, when *the Lord their God was with them, who had brought them up out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage*.

But what is this to those who have not these Encouragements, nor any such sure Promises? How far can *We*, or other *Christians*, make Application of such Passages to our selves, or in what sort depend upon them? This is the *Third and Last* Thing to be consider'd. And,

First, It must be confess'd, that we are not under the same Dispensation with the *Jews* at this Time, and for some Hundreds of Years after these Words were delivered by *Moses* from God. He was pleased to train up the *Jews* in Obedience, by Promises of temporal Blessings of all sorts, as well in War as Peace; this is not stipulated for in the Christian Covenant, and therefore not to be depended on, as promised. It seems indeed to have been but temporary with the *Jews* themselves; after they had made a general Forfeiture (as it were) of God's Favour, by their Apostasies, and foul Idolatries, the Promises of Success in Wars seem to have ended on God's part, and they were brought under the common Providence; for tho' they were far from Idolatry, and worshipped God alone with all Simplicity, and were (for ought that appears) as virtuous in their Manners as ever; yet before our Saviour's Time, they were conquer'd by the *Romans*, and reduc'd into a *Province*, and so continued till their final Overthrow by *Vespasian*, and his brave *Son*: They could not therefore certainly depend on Victory for

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for many Hundred Years, by virtue of God's Promise made to them at first, altho' they continued to worship the Lord their God, and him only, and were observant of the Law of *Moses*. There is therefore the less Reason for *Christians* to expect the fulfilling of such Promises to them, which tho' made to the *Jews* at first, and forfeited by them, were not afterwards constantly and certainly either expected, or fulfilled to them. But, *Secondly*, Altho' we are not under the same Dispensation with the first *Jews*; yet we are under the Providence and Government of the same wise, and good, and powerful Being; we have the same Lord for our God that they had; we are equally in Covenant with him in our Saviour Christ, and for his sake, much more belov'd by him; and have the Hopes and Promises of Blessings infinitely greater in another World; and therefore have no Reason to complain, if God would only bless us with eternal Life and Happiness in Heaven, and leave us to make our Passage to it our selves as easy and commodious as we could, with Innocence and Virtue, without engaging to bless us in particular upon any Terms and Conditions. But this he has not done; for *Godliness*, under Christianity also, *hath the Promises both of this Life, and that to come*; but then they are general, and fulfilled in what kind, and what manner, and at what time it pleases God; which Determinations, tho' they make the Blessings look less certain, and more accidental, and less needful, than if we should obtain *what* we desired and wanted, *when* we thought fit; yet when we consider how wise and good He is, who is to give, we shall see it much better to leave it to God, than to chuse for our selves. We have therefore Leave, as Christians, by virtue of God's Promises in general, and of his Love to Man in Christ Jesus, to wish for, seek for, hope for, and expect, whatever temporal

Blessings we truly stand in need of, that are proper for us in our Case, and fitting for God to give, as he is the wise and good Governor of all the World, and consider'd in the same Relation to other People, as to us; for even in favour of the *Jews* themselves, he could not do any thing unjust or unbecoming himself. To qualify us therefore for God's Favours and temporal Blessings, we must, *in the First Place*, stand in need of them; they must be truly necessary to us, according to our Apprehension; God does indeed oft-times bestow (such is his Goodness) more than we ask or think of; but we have neither Reason to ask or to expect of God what is not truly needful for us, every thing consider'd. *Secondly*, we must ask them of God; we must not ask for what we think not needful, but we must ask of God, altho' he knows it needful before; as well to acknowledge him the Lord and Giver of all things, and our Dependance on him, as also because he requires this Service at our Hands. Not but that God does oft-times give us what we pray not for, because *He* sees it needful or convenient for us, tho' *we* do not; but that we have no Right or Reason to expect what we do not seek for at God's Hands, by humble Prayer and Petition. *Thirdly*, We must endeavour to deserve these Blessings at God's Hands; not strictly speaking, for that is never to be done; but so to qualify and fit our selves for the Blessings we stand in need of, as we are able by the Grace of God to do, *i. e.* by seriously repenting and amending of our past Sins; which, as they are the only things that displease God, and provoke his Judgments, so is there no other way to pacify his Wrath, and to prevent or put an End to them, but by Repentance and Amendment: And this seems very reasonable, that when we are asking Favours of God, we should be trying not to undeserve them at the least. And of this we are so sensible, that we know

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know not how so much as to pray for any temporal Blessings, with any Hopes or tolerable Assurance of receiving them, till we have first resolv'd in our Hearts to reconcile our selves to him, by promising Repentance, and becoming a new Creature. Some present Necessities are generally the Parents of these short-liv'd Resolutions; which, short-liv'd as they are, yet shew, that we know of no better way to qualify us for God's Blessing, temporal as well as spiritual, than by repenting of our Sins past, engaging in Holy Purposes, and promising Amendment. *Fourthly*, When we have asked of God, what we apprehend truly needful, and have endeavoured to remove the only Impediments that stand in the way of his Mercy, we must employ our whole Abilities, do all we can our selves to compass what we ask and want of God. We must be watchful, diligent, most careful and laborious, and use our Reason, and exercise all our Faculties in the best manner that we can. We must act as if all depended on our selves, even when we know we can do nothing but with God's Assistance; for so it is, that the giving us Abilities, and blessing us in using them aright, is generally the Means by which he bestows his greatest Blessings on us; as he preserves us from falling into Pits and Snares, by giving us Eyes and Understanding to direct our Steps, as well as by a general Providence. Thus qualify'd, we have a Right, as Christians and his Creatures, to ask of God whatever temporal Blessings we truly stand in need of, and to expect them from his Bounty and Goodness, and from his boundless Love to us in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore see to the Application of these Rules, to our present Case.

We are call'd upon by publick Order to assemble in these Places, to ask of God Success in our Under-

takings, and Prosperity to our Arms by Sea and Land, both for our selves, and those that join with us; and this we apprehend (in the *First Place*) to be both *just and necessary*, or otherwise we could not ask it of God. We may not ask him to succeed in any cruel or vain-glorious Enterprize. Ambition, Avarice and Injustice, are Things he hates, and therefore nothing of them must be in the Designs which we would have him bless. Our Armies are not gathered to invade an innocent and quiet Prince, nor to extend our Empire and Dominion; but to secure the Rights of injur'd People, and to prevent the Designs of an Ambition that hath for many Years troubled the whole World, and hath been hammering out the Chains that were to bind us in perpetual Servitude. It hath so pleased God, that those Designs should take Effect by Artifice, which open Force had not been able in Forty Years to bring about; and that he who hath hitherto always been the Aggressor, should now be the Defender of his ill acquir'd Possessions. The haughtiest People in the World have apparently sold themselves into the Hands of their greatest Enemies; and the Nations who have all this time preserv'd them from this Mischiefe, with their Good-liking, are now endeavouring to redeem them, too much against their Will. Not, that if they could wear their Chains alone, they would not both deserve them, and become them well; but that the Mischiefe is, they cannot easily be miserable alone: The enslaving a Country is like the firing a House, the next to it always suffers much, if it be not equally destroy'd; and if every Neighbour be not equally careful, it is not to much purpose for one or two to be so. This indeed is the true and proper Justification of these sort of Wars, and of one Nation's intermeddling with the Affairs of another. Their Interests do so hang upon one another,

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another, and are so link'd together, that it is oft-times impossible for one of them to be undone, or greatly mischief'd by itself, without involving its Neighbour in great Misfortunes: Its Neighbour therefore has a Right (even that of Self-preservation) to take what care it can to secure that one from Dangers, that in time will reach itself; and if neither Warning nor Advice will prevent its destructive Courses, it may justly prevent them, if it can, by Force. So that Nations, how independent soever they are on one another, yet are not so with respect to *the Whole*, whose Interests are to be consider'd. If a Man, because he has purchas'd a Piece of Ground, and is the independent Owner of it, should therefore think himself at Liberty to let it run to naught, no body would dispute his Power of doing himself that Mischief: But if he should pretend a Right to cut its Banks, and let in the Sea upon it, every one would perceive he was not so Master of his own, as by destroying it, to endanger another Man's; and they would see the Reasonableness of hindring that Man, by downright Force, from doing what was so like to be a general Mischief to the Neighbourhood, without denying him to be the Owner and true Proprietor of his Ground, if he were indeed so. Let a Man pretend to let the Wolf into his Flocks, because they are *his own*, and the Field *his own*, and see if the neighbouring Shepherds will not hinder him, if they can, from doing so mad and mischievous a Thing at first; or, if it be too late, will not combine against that Enemy and Destroyer, that is like to prove so bad a Neighbour. In these Cases, 'tis plain, that no Propriety or Dominion over our own, can justify our disposing of it to general Mischief, or to general Hazard. No Man is so Master of any thing, as to hurt another by it, whom he should not hurt; the Bottom of which is this, That no Man
has

has a Right to do Evil; and if he will assume such Power, others have Right to hinder the Exercise of it, because every Man has a Right to Self-defence, if he has not departed from it by Agreement. And the Reason of things being the same in great Matters as in small, 'tis evident that Nations may prevent Dangers that are great and sure, tho' not immediately imminent, but at some Distance; because it may be all too late, when the Evil is at the Door. And tho' the Occasions of War should certainly be as few and clear as possible, yet without these Allowances, there could be no such thing as Peace, and Liberty, and Freedom of Commerce maintain'd in the World.

The Power of determining War, is not in the Subjects, but, for good Reasons, placed in better Hands; but nothing can hinder them from judging of its Reasonableness and Necessity; nor is any thing of better use, than that they who fight abroad, and they who pray at home, and they who contribute to it, should all of them judge it reasonable and necessary; and that is certainly the Case in hand. We stay not to be swallow'd up the last, for that our Situation would, it may be, give us; but we assist our Neighbours, that neither they nor we may be swallow'd up at all. We would not become a pillaged Province under an Universal Monarchy; but the Platform of that Edifice is already drawn out, and its Foundations deeply laid by the destructive Falseness, or the weak Submissions of a great People, and thereby our Neighbours are every way endangered; and when they lose their Liberties, ours are in Jeopardy, and therefore we engage in their Assistance, as being next to them in Danger. In our last Wars, we fought for that which has been lost in Peace; and we now fight for that which we believed depended on the Loss or Safety of that Country,

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and that is, the Liberty of these Parts of the World. What we have lost, may therefore teach us how to value what we have to lose. We therefore fight to save our selves *from* all that is evil and mischievous, and *for* all that is desirable in Human Life, the Preservation of our Country's Liberties, our Lives and our Religion; Success in such a Cause, is what we apprehend most *needful*.

Secondly, We must ask it of God. *It is he that giveth Victory to Kings, and delivereth his Anointed from the Peril of the Sword.* This is to signify, that we acknowledge our Dependance on him, attribute all Power to him, and adore him in his Providence and Government of the World, in Opposition to those prophane Spirits who know no God, and think that all Things come by Chance, and are under the Direction of no intelligent Power; but that Victory evermore inclines to the superior Strength, the better Discipline, and the most numerous Host: All which Particulars are overthrown by Observation of the contrary in Instances innumerable, and so unaccountably strange, that they demonstrate plainly an over-ruling Power, with a most wise Government. We must therefore ask Success of God; and it is for that purpose, that we are here this Day assembled together in this Place before him.

Thirdly, We must not only ask of God, but we must also qualify our selves to receive this much desired and wanted Blessing of Success. Our Wants are indeed the first Motives of our applying to God; but since we may come to want thro' our Faults, and for them may deserve to continue in those Wants, we must endeavour to deserve to have those Wants supply'd. The Cause of Liberty and Religion is certainly the best that can be named; but even this may justly miscarry in wicked Hands, that deserve not the one, and slight the other. *Popery*
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and *Protestantism* are now, in the main, but different Names, to signify different Parties, different Interests, and different Opinions in Religion. One would think that different Opinions should produce different Practices, and that the Reformation of Manners should follow, upon Restitution of the Gospel to the Liberty of being known again, and read, and understood by the People: But every one, I believe, observes, that good Principles are never so sure of their Consequences as bad ones. Popery is truly a very great Corruption of Religion as ever any was; and corrupt Practices may and do follow very plentifully from their corrupt Principles. The *Reformation* sets us right in our Notions, Principles, and understanding of the Word of God, but very little else follows that should; our Practice is equally naught with theirs; so that we only incur the greater Condemnation, and whilst we have the Light, will walk in Darkness, and therefore stumble without Excuse or Pity. In truth, the seeing how unedifying Lives the Reformed World live, and what ill use they make of their spiritual Advantages, has so cool'd the Zeal of some, and harden'd others in their old Errors, that there is now no Call after Reformation of Corruptions, no demanding the Cup in the Lord's Supper, nor any farther Desire of having the Scriptures in the vulgar Tongue, for the use of the Common People; all which were heretofore the Demands of good, sincere, and understanding People in Popish Countries, themselves the while Papists: They think they see no good Effects of our Pretences to a purer Worship of God; we only change Sides, and live as we did before; and therefore they pursue these Requests no farther. And indeed, there is a strange Coldness and Indifference for Religion as *Reformed*, even in the Reformed Countries; both *High* and *Low* seem to set but little by it, and concern

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cern themselves no farther for it, than it turns to their particular Account and Interest. That Christian and becoming Zeal that heretofore flamed in the Hearts, and Tongues, and Lives of its Professors, seems to be quite extinguished; and all the Cries against the Popish Church, proceed rather from Custom and habitual Aversion, than from a true Sense of her Abominations, and a Zeal that is judicious, and founded on a right Understanding of those mighty Corruptions that overspread her Face: So that we seem not only to have denied the Consequences of our good Principles, but even to slight those very Principles, as they distinguish and denominate us *Protestants*.

These are but ill Preparatives for the Expectations of Blessing and Success, against a People who can hardly be more immoral than our selves, and who have indeed a worse Religion, but a truer Zeal for it. That we may therefore ask of God with any sort of Confidence, we must amend those evil Practices that are the Scandals of Religion, and the Impediments to God's Favour, and live as becomes the Professors of the Reformed Religion, in all Godliness and Honesty; adorning a good Profession with good Manners, and trying to speed a good Cause, with the Prayers of a good People; and that is also the purpose of our meeting here at this Time to humble our selves before God, to repent sincerely of our past Offences, to intreat for the Forgiveness of them, to promise all Amendment and Obedience for the future, and to ask the Assistance of his Grace to put these good Resolves in Execution. God often does give good Success to the Designs of unreform'd and unrepenting People; but that is what they can neither ask nor expect from him: He has wise Purposes of his own to serve, that we know nothing of, and always acts with the greatest Reason; but that this should
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turn to our Advantage, we can never hope with Reason. When we intreat for Blessings out of course, we ought either to ground our Prayers on general Promises, or to present our selves in such a State of Innocence, or true Repentance, as that there may be no Obstructions in the way of God's Mercies. There is no coming to him with Hope of Favour and Acceptance, but coming qualify'd as he requires, and that is, coming truly humbled, and sincerely penitent.

When thus prepar'd and qualify'd to seek for Blessings at God's Hands, we must, in the *Last Place*, take all the Care, use all the Diligence, and follow the Courses that Reason, Prudence, Observation, and Experience shall suggest, as fittest to attain the End we aim at. We ask of God the Preservation of our Life and Health, but we our selves must take all Care about our Meat and Drink, our Cloathing and our Exercise, which are the Means of its Preservation. We ask of God our daily Bread, but we our selves must plough, and sow, and cultivate the Ground, and take all other necessary Pains to reap the Fruits of it. We do not so much as mean, when we ask the Blessings we want, that God should give them us immediately from Heaven, without the Employment of those Faculties and Powers both of Body and Mind that he hath given us. We must therefore mean, that he would give them to our Industry and Care, our Diligence and Labour to attain them, and bless the righteous Means we use to succeed in righteous Undertakings. And thus in the Case before us, Horses and Chariots were found to be of great Use in War; and therefore the *Jews* would naturally and reasonably be afraid of wanting them themselves, and of seeing their Enemies abound with them; this was no Fault, nor was such Fear to be remov'd, but by particular Charge of God. *Not to*

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fear them, which included a Promise of Assistance and Defence against them: Where therefore there is no such Promise or Engagement, that Fear is reasonable, and therefore Men are left to make such Provision as they find necessary. And so the Superiority of Number is truly an Advantage in War, and hardly to be surmounted; and a less Army will naturally be afraid of a greater, and Men do naturally, as our Saviour advises, consider whether they with Ten Thousand, can meet an Enemy with Twenty Thousand; and find it is impracticable. They must therefore, if they be wise, and act reasonably, increase their Numbers, or fall from their Pretensions, *i. e.* without a particular Promise of God, (which is not now his Method) they must make such Provision of things necessary, as Reason and Prudence shall suggest sufficient for their Purpose. We come to ask of God Success against our Enemies, and present him, we believe, a just and righteous Undertaking; but we ask him to bless *our Fleets and Armies*, the Instruments that are made use of to obtain the Satisfaction and Security that is wanted. We ask him, that the Conduct of our Leaders, and the Courage of our Soldiers may answer the Justice of the Cause they take in hand; and that our National Offences, and all our secret Sins, may be so overlook'd, as not to provoke him to blast our righteous Enterprizes, and cause us to fall from the Hopes he has himself been pleas'd, by his former Blessings, to raise in us.

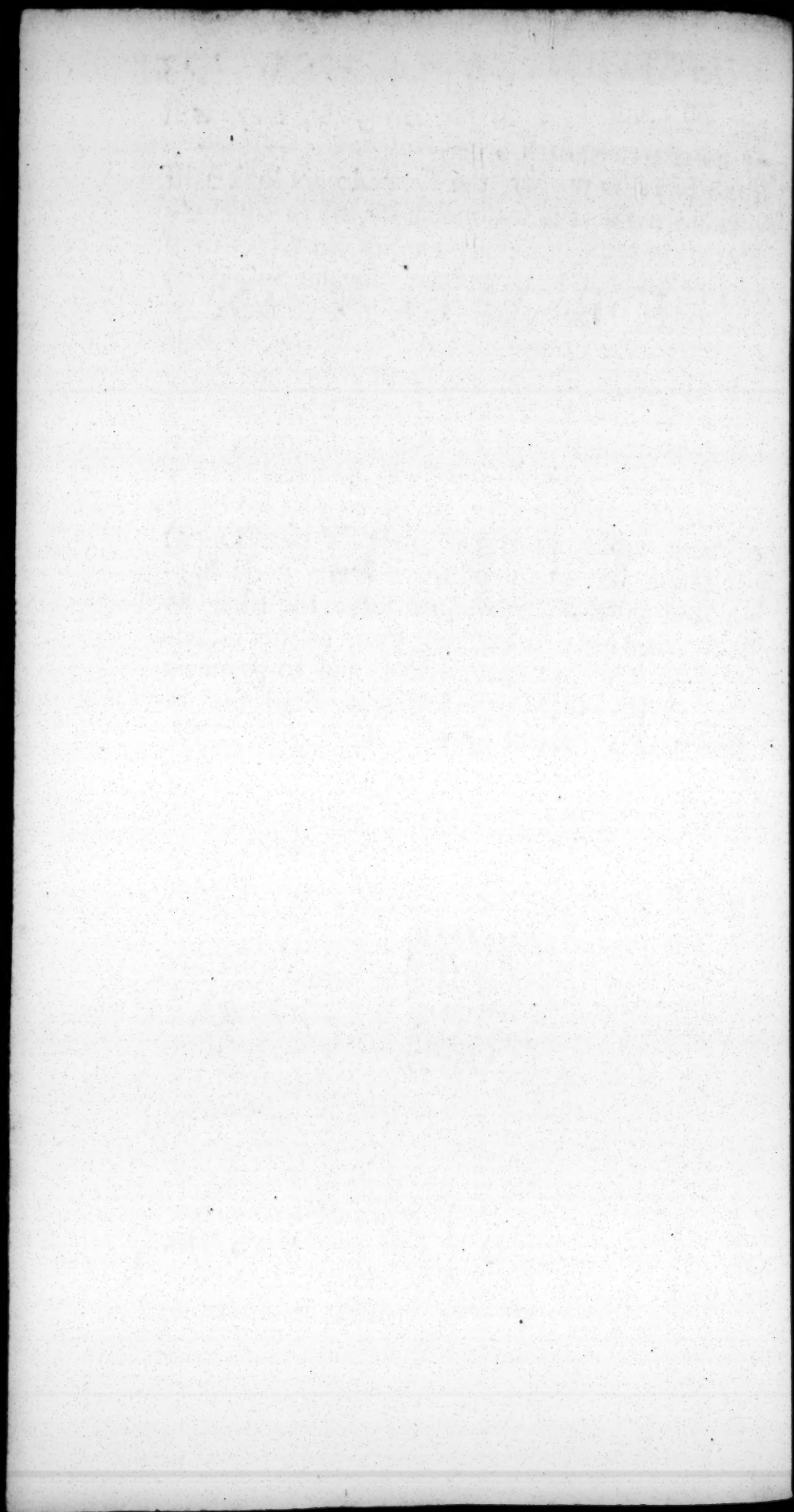
We ask him, moreover, (*Lastly*) to give us Peace and Unity at Home; and that the Hearts of all our People may amicably conspire in promoting the Publick Welfare; that the Zeal of all Parties may spend itself in Reality, as it always does in Pretence, in doing the Nation Service; for all that does not tend to *that*, will quickly be found to be

be but Faction, Craft, and taking Vengeance ; either the Insult and Retaliation of a domineering Party on the one hand, or the Attempt of a disoblig'd or disappointed one on the other. This we ask, because we apprehend it to be absolutely necessary ; but this we must not only ask of God, but endeavour to effect our selves. For tho' *it is God that makerh Men to be of one Mind in an House* ; yet it is by means that he hath put within their Power, namely, by Consideration of the Usefulness, Convenience, and Necessity of such good Union and Agreement. We shall by our Divisions weaken our selves, and hurt each other ; but we make both thereby an easier Prey to the Common Enemy : 'Tis better for *Him*, we should destroy our selves by the Hands of one another, than by his Means and at his Costs. One Party (which you will) shall, with his good-likings, obtain the Pleasure of Revenge, such as it is ; but he alone shall reap the Advantage of such Victories. 'Twere better far, that he should do his Work himself by fair and open War, and (if it must be so) by Wounds that we shall never be asham'd of. Concord at home, and good Agreement, are always necessary to all Nations, and they cannot long subsist without it. Our Saviour says it, and our Reason and our Experience say it also, and we believe them all ; but something is too much for all ; Men's private Passions carry it against their private and their publick Judgment ; and their angry Resentments are (it seems) too much for all Authority, and all Arguments. In vain hath it pleas'd God to bless us with such a Centre of Union and Agreement, as thro' Misfortune or Mistake, the Nation seems not to have had for many, many Years ; and such as all Parties (if I must not evermore except the *Popish* one) not only may, but seriously profess they do unanimously meet in, to love and honour as they ought to love

and honour; in vain, if *for Her sake*, they will come no nearer to each other.

If the *Place* be proper, the *Times* do not look as if they would make it unseasonable for me to conclude with praying again for Unity among our selves; and that laying aside all Fears and unreasonable Suspicions of each other, Men would, each in his Sphere, attend alone to the Common Good, to strengthen their Friends Abroad, and to secure Tranquillity and Peace at Home. Without these Studies and Endeavours, all our Prayers to God will be but as so many idle Wishes; but when we do our Part, he never fails of doing his. Let us therefore, all of us (for no body is too great, no body is too little for their Duty) do what will become good *Protestants*, good *Englishmen*, and good *Subjects*; and leave the Issue, as we must, to God; beseeching him, of his Goodness, to hear what we have asked, and to grant us what he, in his Wisdom and Mercy, shall find is best, and most expedient for us.







S E R M O N IX.

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

A T

W I N D S O R,

J U N E 17. 1705.

2 Sam. XII. *Part of the 5th and 7th Verses.*

And he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the Man that hath done this thing shall surely die : and Nathan said to David, Thou art the Man.

THese Words are the Representation that *Nathan* made to *David*, by way of Parable, to convince him of his great Wickedness, in the Matter of *Uriah the Hittite* ; and contain in them, *First,*
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The Judgment *David* pass'd against the rich Oppressor, *As the Lord liveth, the Man that hath done this thing, shall surely die.* And, Secondly, The Application *Nathan* here made, *Thou art the Man.* But since the History and the Parable are so well known, and the Righteousness of the Judgment here pass'd, and the Fitness of the Application, so allow'd of, and assented to by all; it will be, I believe, of less Benefit to speak to them, than it will be to see what *Uses* we may make of such a Judgment, and such an Application, in the manner they were here pass'd. And,

First, We may observe, that the readiest way to pass a true Judgment upon any Occasion, is, to be one's self disinterested and unconcern'd, and to remove the Cause to a Third Person. *David* here consider'd the Case of a rich Man taking by Violence from his poor Neighbour a Lamb, that was his single Treasure and Delight, to spare his own innumerable Flocks; and could not once imagine it was possible for him himself to have, at any time of his whole Life, done the like: His generous Temper freed him from all Suspicion of such Avarice; nor had he ever entertain'd a Traveller at any poor Man's Cost, or grieved him in such manner; the Circumstances of his Life were never such, nor such at any time his Disposition. And therefore he is very free to consider narrowly, how much Injustice, and how much Cruelty, were seen in this one single Act of Oppression; and viewing it in all its most unsightly Colours, as freely could condemn it. Keep but your Conscience clear, and your Understanding will generally be so too; our Passions and our Guilt corrupt our Judgment strangely; our Wishes and Desires cause us to argue strongly in their Favour; and our Aversion shews us every thing amiss in such

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as are the Objects of it. The Reason why we refer our Causes to the Arbitrement of a Third Person, is not because he understands them better than our selves, (for that is not always so) nor that he loves Justice better, but because he is an unconcern'd, indifferent Man, and has no Interest or Inclination to corrupt and bias him one way or other, but will judge according to Reason, and what appears. It is the same Case with our selves, when either Love or Hate, Hope or Fear, or any other Passion possesses us; we are too much prejudic'd to judge exactly righteous Judgment; every Inclination or Aversion drives us from that Firmness and Steadiness of Mind which is requisite to the being impartial; every little slight Appearance is an Argument when our Goodwill is on its side; and the most solid, weighty Reasons, are light as the Dust of the Balance, when urged against our Interest or our Humour: So that to be a fair and equal Arbiter, we must divest our selves of all Concern and Interest. This was the Blindness of the Antients *Justice*; she was to see no Party, know no Person, but to hear Reason and Proof of Allegation, and to feel which Scale weigh'd heaviest, and determine for it.

'Tis certainly one of the hardest Things in the World to be indifferent, and to stand exactly pois'd; but yet to form a right Judgment, 'tis absolutely necessary; for just as much as the Mind inclines one without Reason and Proof, just so much Wrong we are inclined to do, and to determine without Truth.

Every Man and Woman looks well enough in their own Glass, but that is not the way to judge of Beauty; we stand too near our selves, to see our selves exactly. In a word, we love our selves too well, to censure hardly; and the Voice of Slander is the other Extream; so that the common Judgment ofteneft hits the Truth, *i. e.* in judging of our publick

lick Actions. This Unconcernedness it is, that occasions us to judge more hardly of the Sins of other Men, to which we are not liable by Disposition or Temptation, than of our own; not that we judge more hardly of other Peoples Sins than they deserve, but that we find our selves at Liberty, by our Innocence, to view them in their proper Colours, and to judge impartially of them, and condemn them as they ought to be condemned; whereas our own Guilt and Fear, or our Self-love, will not let us see our own Offences in so good a Light, nor suffer us to condemn them with such Rigour.

That we may therefore know our selves the better, and judge impartially of Offences, we may observe the prudent way of *Parables*, which the Spirit of God uses throughout the Scriptures, to bring Men to a Sense of their Condition, and an Acknowledgment of their Offence, by transferring the Cause to another Person, and shewing Men themselves in another's Image; which is a *Second Use* we may make of *Nathan's* treating *David* in this manner.

Our Saviour, who was exceeding tender, where he could find the least degree of Modesty, uses this way of *Parables* most frequently, instructing and reproving the *Jews* in the Person of a Stranger, (no body could tell who, or where, or when) without any Mortification or Reproach; so that hearing, they might not hear, and seeing, they might not perceive; and yet be converted and healed, *i. e.* they might hear what he said in *Parables*, as said of other People, to whom the History related, and not as spoken to themselves; and yet might both consider what was said, and apply it to themselves, and reap the Benefit of it. The End our Saviour drove at, was not their Shame, but their Amendment; and therefore if they would but apprehend his Meaning,

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he would press no farther. Not but that he also made the other Uses of Parables to which they are fitted ; as sometimes to convey his Sense in a Figure, which he could not think fit to do in plain Words, for many good Reasons ; and at other Times, to do as *Nathan* here does, drive them to accuse and condemn themselves, in a Third Person, which they would not have done in their own. *When the Lord of the Vineyard cometh* (saith Christ, *Math. xxi. 40.*) *what will he do to those Husbandmen*, who had beaten and stoned his Servants, and killed at last his Son ? *They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked Men, &c.* Thus, by this Parable, he brought them to acknowledge the Justice of God in destroying the *Jewish* People, for their great Infidelity and Cruelty shewn to himself, the true Messiah, and the Son of God ; a thing they had hardly ever done, had he said the thing in so many plain Words ; because we can discern the Faults, and assign the Punishment of all the World, sooner than our own. Had *Nathan* come to *David*, and told him of a certain Prince in the World, who having abundance of Wives and Concubines of his own, would not yet, in a Fit of Dissolution, satisfy those Inclinations where he might without Offence or Injury ; but would needs send to one, who was his Neighbour and a Nobleman, to have his Wife, who had but one, and whom he lov'd most tenderly, and with whom he liv'd in the best manner that could be ; and accordingly debauch'd her from her Nuptial Bed, bereaving the Man of all the Joy and Satisfaction of his Life : Had *Nathan* address'd to *David* with this Story, the King had found out his Drift immediately ; but the rude Application would have given him such Distaste, that tho' he might have been convinced of his Guilt, yet probably he would not so freely have confessed himself guilty. The

Bluntness of Reproof does not well suit with the Modesty of Human Nature; and downright coming upon a Man, puts him upon his Guard, into whose good-liking you might have insinuated your self, and gained your Point by artificial soft Approaches. They who will hear your Wisdom, and attend to your Reproofs, whilst you are speaking of another Man, if you assault themselves with Accusation, will avoid you with Contempt, or hear you with a sullen Silence; nay, when a Man is sure you come with purpose of reproofing him, he will endure better thro' another's Side, and by the way of Parable, than by immediate Application, tho' he himself will certainly apply it as intended. And People who design the Good and Benefit of those they would reprove, will be as careful as they can to do it in the most acceptable manner; their chiefest Aim is to secure their End, and their next Point of Wisdom is to use such Methods as are easiest and most useful; and this especially should be observ'd in dealing with perverse Tempers, or with great Superiors. And this is the more remarkable in the Instance before us, because the Message came immediately from God, and was to be deliver'd without Regard to any thing that might happen; he was to tell *David* how wicked a Man he was, and had committed the worst Adultery, and the worst Murder that could be, as they were circumstantiated and dress'd, and that God was exceedingly displeased with him for it. This he must say, let *David* take it as he would; but yet he took the Liberty to prepare his way by Methods the most prudent, by introducing his Parable with this Message, which shew'd the King the Injustice and the Cruelty he had been guilty of, and caused him to condemn himself, by condemning the like Offences in another Man, he knew not whom; and when he was, by this pre-
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judging of himself, disposed to bear it, the Prophet then speaks out, *Thou art the Man*. The Prophet must discharge his Duty, and deliver his Message, if it come from God, let the Event be what it will; that he agrees to, when devoted to his Service, and knows his Recompence: But still it will be left to the Discretion of the Prophet, to pitch upon the manner of doing it, and therein is his Wisdom to be exercis'd, by studying well the Men he has to deal withal. *John Baptist* openly rebukes the Prince, and tells him that he must not have his Brother *Philip's* Wife, and is a great Example of the Freedom that a Messenger of God may take, when gentler Courses fail him. *St. Paul*, the perfectest Model of a wise Ecclesiastick that is left us, will talk to *Felix* in Generals, and preach of Temperance and Righteousness, Virtues to which that Governor was every way a Stranger, and leave him to make the Application himself; which he did, it seems, with Trembling and Disorder. Both of them did, I doubt not, what they found most proper, considering Time, and Place, and Person. And we want not other Instances in both the Testaments, of different Ways of managing different Persons, with more or less Reservedness. And therefore, great Discretion is to temper Zeal, to prevent its Excesses; and Zeal is to come in, and hinder our Discretion from degenerating into Fear and Cowardice, and being corrupted by our Interest or Self-love; for no Example can be an adequate sufficient Rule in all Cases, to all People. Our Saviour's frequent use of Parables, seems to bestow the Preference on the soft and gentle way of treating with Mankind, and bringing them to Conviction by Reason; tho' he sometimes uses more Severity and Sharpness, according as the Case requir'd. *Nathan* here takes the same Course, and with good Effect. *David* was again caught
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into a Condemnation of himself, and a Revocation of *Abfalom* from Banishment, by a like Parable, by a wise Woman, suborn'd by *Joab* for that purpose: She told him a mournful Story of her being a Widow, and having two Sons, the one of which was kill'd by the other, and the surviving one pursu'd to Death by her Relations, and by these Means her House and Name should be extinguish'd quite. The King takes Pity on her sad Condition, and promises no further Prosecution should be made for her Son's Blood; and then she shews how much it was his own Case, who had for ever banished *Abfalom* for the Murther of his Brother *Amnon*; a thing that could not now be remedied, nor better'd by another's suffering; upon which he took the like Pity on himself, hearkned to the Desires of all his People, and recall'd his Banish'd. We can see that in another's Case, which our Concern will not let us see in our own, even when it is sometimes to our Advantage.

Thirdly, We may observe from hence the great Partiality and Blindness of Self-love, that will not let us see how heinous our own Offences are, nor suffer us to condemn them with the Rigour they deserve, when we do see them. If the cruel Oppression of this rich Man in the Parable deserv'd Death, in the Opinion of *David*, what would the Violation of the Marriage-bed deserve? And what the Murther of the Husband? But *David* knew of no such Man as yet; till *Nathan* took the Glass, and shew'd him the Man that had done that Wickedness, and that (according to his own Judgment) deserv'd to die for it. When one would do *Justice*, one should remove the Cause to a Third Person, and be wholly unconcern'd; but when we would shew *Mercy*, then let us bring it home, and put our selves in

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in the Condition. But let us take King David at his Word, That *the Man that hath done this thing shall surely die*, or deserves to die; and we may see how transcendently great the Mercies of God are to Men, above what Men can afford with Reason to one another. Violent Theft is worthy of Death, so is Adultery, and so is Murther; they are Offences that destroy the Peace and Happiness of Mankind, and overthrow Society and good Order; so that there is no living where they go unpunish'd, and therefore every one condemns them with all the Reason he has. Now all these Sins are no less heinous in the sight of God, than they are mischievous to Men; and yet God pardons them upon Repentance. 'Tis true, no Sin can give him any Disturbance, or do him any real Mischief; as neither can any Virtue make Accession or Increase of Happiness to him: But if Vice and Virtue are any thing but Names, if Good and Evil are not Things that belong to this Life only, then must Sin displease him and offend him greatly; if there be another Life, and any Truth in the whole Body of Revelations, the Mercy of God is infinitely great in forgiving Sins to Men upon Repentance; and so great, that if Men should extend the like to one another, the World could not long subsist.

The Prophet having brought the Prince to condemn an Act of cruel Violence in another Man, and thereby prepar'd him to do as much for himself, if it were just, pulls off his Disguise, and discovers himself to him, tells him in plain Words, *Thou art the Man*, and gives him the History of his ill-contriv'd Adultery and Murther at length. The Parable referr'd to his Adultery only, because *That* was the principal Fact in Purpose and Design, and the Murther only followed, as it were by Accident; but now he charges him with both, the wicked Cause,

Cause, and the more wicked Effect: *Thou art the Man* that didst debauch the Wife, and kill the Husband.

There are some Things relating to this Murther of *Uriah*, too considerable to be overlook'd; and therefore let us see to them under this Head, *Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the Sword, and hast taken his Wife to be thy Wife, and hast slain him with the Sword of the Children of Ammon*. Here he is plainly charg'd with the Murther of *Uriah*, and said to have killed him, tho' he fell by the Sword of the Children of *Ammon*, at the Siege of *Rabbah*. The Reason is, because he sent to *Joab* to place *Uriah* in the Fore-front of the Battel, and then to order his Companions to retire from him, that the Enemy might the better fall upon him and kill him. Here is a plain Design of murdering him, and laid in the most likely manner to effect it. *David* had had the Guilt of Murther, had *Uriah* escaped by Valour or by Accident, because he intended the Thing, and pitch'd upon the surest Means of doing it. *Joab* the General was involv'd in this Murther also, because he was conscious of the King's Design, and had not the Honesty to put it by, or refuse to be the Instrument of such a Piece of Villany; and no Compliance with his Prince's Orders can excuse him: The most arbitrary Monarch on the Earth can have no Power to do Injustice; and he who has no Right to *Command*, can have no Right to *Obedience*. Had *Joab* been as brave as he was valiant, and good as he was cunning, he might have easily preserv'd *Uriah's* Life; for which the King, in sober Humour, would have thank'd and bless'd him: But the least he should have done, had been to have refus'd the vile Employment; but chusing rather to comply with such unjust and murderous Commands, (tho' of his King) he was certainly involv'd in the

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Guilt of *Uriah's* Murther. As for the Men who retir'd from him in Battel, it is not certain whether they were let into the Knowledge of this Design, but might retire according to Orders; and that is most likely, considering the Numbers that must otherwise have been acquainted with this wicked Project: 'Tis sure, that as many as designedly retir'd from him, when the Enemy press'd upon him, were designedly guilty of this Murther, and betray'd a brave Man to Death. 'Tis a true Plague, this Wickedness! A Man infects all he converses with, and gives them Death, but dies himself also. *David* makes *Joab* guilty of *Uriah's* Death, and many other Officers and Soldiers; but is himself, after all that, the Man that kills *Uriah*. The Children of *Ammon* kill'd him fairly, tho' *David* kill'd him treacherously, by their Hand; the Scriptures say, that *David* kill'd him with the Sword of *Ammon*; but the Reproaches of the Prophet signify, that *Ammon* murthered him by *David's* wicked Order, by *Joab's* wicked Obedience, and by the base Desertion of his Fellow Soldiers. The Hand alone that killed this worthy Soldier, was entirely innocent and free from the Guilt of Blood, killing him only as an Enemy; and the Men that touch'd him not, were guilty of his Death; that is, the Force of wicked Purposes, pursued with wicked correspondent Orders. Men must not therefore think they avoid the Guilt of many Crimes, by avoiding the being concerned immediately in Person in committing them; there is a murdering Men by other Peoples Swords than our own; and a swearing People out of their Estates, by other Men's Perjuries; and a doing Violence by other Peoples Hands, of which we may ourselves be guilty, and for which we shall one Day answer, as well as our Instruments. A Man may contract Guilt, even by Intentions, Wishes, and Desires, altho'

altho' they never take Effect; they are Matter of Command on God's Part, and of Obedience on ours, as far as it is in our Power to order or restrain them, and no farther; but when we have expressed those Thoughts and Desires to other People, they are no longer ours alone, but will take Effect according to the Influence or Command we have over those to whom they are communicated; and according to the Measure of that Power, shall we be guilty of the Mischiefs that follow. If one Man perswade another, his Equal, to a Piece of Wickedness, he will be guilty of that Wickedness himself, tho' it be not plain how far, nor in what degree or measure; but if he command, or use Authority with Arguments to his Son, or Servant, to commit the same Wickedness, he will be, in such case, more guilty, proportionably to the Power and Influence a Father or a Master is presumed to have over a Son or Servant, which he uses to so bad purpose. If *David* the King, or *Joab* the General, command a common Soldier to retire from *Uriah* in the Heat of Battel, and leave him to perish, they will be somewhat more guilty of *Uriah's* Death, than a common Officer would be, tho' counselling the same Thing; because the Authority and Influence of the former was so much greater, and more like to take Effect; and the Soldier is presum'd to be more at Liberty to refuse his Compliance with such unjust and villainous Commands, when they come from one who is nearer to him, and whose Displeasure he dreads not so much, nor hopes so much from his Favour. Thus there are many ways of doing Mischief and committing Wickedness, besides the being actually and personally concern'd in doing it; and let the Means be what they will, we shall be answerable for them, as far as they are ours, and for the Force we give them by our Command or Threats, by Counsel and Persuasion.

swasion, by our abetting, and Encouragement and Approbation ; nay, by our very Looks and Gestures, and sometimes our Silence. Whatever way we take designedly to influence any one to what is wicked, no doubt we shall be answerable for ; for this is our Ability and Power, and this we use to Mischief, and forbidden Purposes. Let the People therefore that are busied in this bad Work of setting others upon wicked Actions, consider this, That however innocent they appear to the World, and unconcern'd, however wary to avoid the Censure of People, and the Punishment of the Laws, by keeping out of Sight, and at a Distance ; they are nevertheless guilty before God, according to the Power and Influence they have had over the Instruments of Wickedness that they employ'd ; and that it will avail them little at the Day of Judgment, to have kept their Tongues from Perjury, and their Hands from Blood, or other Violence, when their Hearts have been deeply concern'd in willing and desiring, and contriving and resolving, and their Tongues employ'd in insinuating, perswading, threatening, or commanding Wickedness to other People.

This Use we may well make of this Circumstance of the Matter of *Uriah* ; *David* is charg'd with killing him, altho' he perish'd by the Sword of *Ammon* : His Heart was in the Matter, he used his Authority with *Joab*, and he his with other People, and so the Man perished. The Fountain of this Wickedness was *David* ; it was he that kill'd *Uriah*.

When *David* rose up from his Bed, and fell into the Snare that was not laid for him, but for which his Sloath and Fulness most unhappily disposed him, (and which ought to warn us all, the great ones most especially, of the great Dangers of luxurious Idleness) how little did he think of all these Consequences ! O turn away mine Eyes, lest they behold
Vanity !

Vanity! was a Prayer that should not then have been forgotten. That curious heated Gaze, will cost you all your Innocence and Virtue ; you will debauch the Loyalty of the Wife, abuse the bravest Subject that you have, and murther him at last, and imbrue in his Blood the Hands of a great General ; and it may be, of many other, innocent as yet, and honest Officers and Soldiers. Had these things been foretold, they had scarcely been believ'd ; but yet they came to pass, and not unnaturally or strangely : One Sin engages us in more, and when once we leave the right way, we know not whither we shall wander. This is a Lesson that we ought for ever to remember ; and could we see, as sure as we shall feel the Consequences of our Actions, we should be constantly upon our Guard ; and we might see, as well as need to be, would we consider Human Nature, and our selves, and observe how it has generally been with other People ; for where the Passions of Men are at the bottom, and the great moving Springs, we may reasonably expect the like Effects and Fruits in all Men, and in all Ages.

Another Use that we may make of *Nathan's* Application, may be, to use his Words our selves upon occasion ; to be in earnest, and to let our Consciences pronounce these Words distinctly to us, *Thou art the Man*, when there is Reason. A Prophet will not always be at hand, to tell us when we have offended ; but every one's own Heart will be to him a Prophet, and speak it plainly to him, if he will but hear it. We do not want a very faithful and exact Remembrancer within, of God's own Appointment, if we will give our selves but leave to meditate and recollect. And this indeed is the true Use we are to put our Memories to, when we read or hear the Word of God, or Books of human Composition and Authority, Religious or Historical, or

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hear Discourses in these Places. We may, by an honest Application, make good use of all we hear or read; find our selves often represented and describ'd; often spoken to, exhorted and reprov'd, commanded, threatned, and encouraged, in the Person of other People; 'tis spoken in general; we our selves must bring it home; 'tis said of a certain I know not who; the Conscience is to say, *Thou art the Man*; our publick Labours else would be to little purpose. We do, and must direct our Discourses to the World of Hearers in general, and speak of Duties, and insist upon Commands and Prohibitions, and on most Points, in general; and dwell not on private Cases, or particular Occasions, of which we know little or nothing; it is the Part of every single Hearer, to make a faithful and exact Application of what belongs to him, himself: This Command is general, and obliges me; this Prohibition takes in me; this is a Duty I have long neglected, a Fault of which I have not yet repented, so as to forego; this is a general Sin, in which I am involv'd; this Offence is laid to *David's* Charge, but yet my Conscience tells me too, *I am the Man*. The Man that has abused his Neighbour, and defiled his Bed, and thrown a spurious Issue into his Possessions; the Man that has deprived his Neighbour of his Fame and Honour, by secret Lies and Slanders, sent abroad into the World by other Peoples Folly and Credulity; deprived him of his Estate by Perjuries and forged Deeds, of People hired to it by my Contrivance and Suggestion, and Rewards. Some such way as this it is, that what we hear or read must operate; it is thus that *Moses* and the *Prophets*, *Christ* and his Evangelists, Apostles, and other Ministers, tho' dead, yet speak to us; and thus we must avail our selves of their Instructions, Exhortations and Corrections; our

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Hearts

Hearts will never fail of reminding us what Applications will be proper, unless we corrupt them by wicked Principles, continual Pleasures, or Sottishness uninterrupted.

'Twas a strange Lethargy that *David* fell into for the Space of at least Ten Months; and one can hardly tell how a Man so quick and tender as he was, could possibly continue so long unmolested. The Liberties of Princes and great Men in the *East* were always very great, and so continue to this Day; and nothing puts so strong an Impediment in the way of the Gospel, as that one Article of Women; but yet Adultery was so positively forbidden and punished by *Moses's* Law, that *David*, an understanding *Jew*, could not excuse himself to himself by any such *Eastern* Indulgences: And as for the Murther, *David* knew better than all the World besides, that he was guilty of it; the World concluded he fell in open Battel, by the Hand of a declared Enemy; but *David* knew his own Intentions and his Orders. We are therefore at liberty to think, that *David* was not, for Ten whole Months, perfectly ignorant and unconcern'd, and without all troublesome Reflection on what had past; but that he was, like People half asleep, alarm'd with a sort of distant Noise, but not enough to waken them throughout; he lay as it were in pleasing Slumbers, and was afraid of rising to a full Recollection of what he had done, and yet not quite able to shake it off. In the Ignorance we are in of what could give him full Security under the Burthen of such Sins, we may reasonably enough conclude he was not altogether undisturb'd, tho' he was but now awaken'd thoroughly. 'Tis no new thing for People to live secure and unrepenting of great Sins, for as many Years as *David* did Months; but their Conscience is not all that time asleep, their Hearts do all that while their Office, and rebuke them often;

often; but they are neither heard, nor attended to as they should be; and that, 'tis probable, was David's Case, till *Nathan* came from God, and brought him fully to his Senses.

But be that as it will; let a Man but deal sincerely, and be true to himself, I think his Conscience will never fail of doing its Office, of giving him good Warning of offending, and of reproaching him with his Offences, and telling him, without Disguise, *He is the Man*. When I say, therefore, that a Man should use these Words of *Nathan*, and be a Prophet to himself, I mean that he should use no Shifts or wicked Arts, to stifle his Remembrance of his former Life; but let his Conscience do its Part, in reflecting on what is past, and in applying faithfully what is heard or read, proper to his Condition; and I make no doubt but he would often hear it say with *Nathan*, *Thou art the Man*. And truly, unless a Man will do his Heart this Right, as to let it speak freely, rebuke, admonish, and remind, upon all Occasions, without endeavouring to choak or silence it by vicious Habits, and a constant Succession of Business or Diversions, it will be hard for him ever to be again renew'd to Repentance; a Prophet is not ready always to make such seasonable Applications as a Man's own Conscience will, which travels always with him, nor press Particulars so home; and if there should be one, he might not, possibly, be heard; for when a Man has harden'd himself against the Reproaches that his own Heart makes him, and baffled it by frequent Slightings and Reflections, it will naturally slacken, grow by degrees less sensible, and let the Man go on uncheck'd and uncontroll'd, and then the Prophet never can be heard; and this is the natural way of hardning the Heart, till, in time, it come to be wholly unaffected with what it reads or hears, and all Instruction,

Exhortation, and Rebuke, is lost upon it ; the fear-
fullest Condition a Man can fall into, and hardly to be
avoided by any one who flights this faithful Moni-
tor, which is placed by God in him, to guide him
and direct him.

These are some of the Uses we may make of this
Transaction betwixt the Prophet and the King. And
when so good a Man as *David* falls into such horri-
ble Offences, the rest of the World had need be
much upon their Guard. But this is no Encourage-
ment to either good or bad People ; they have no-
thing to imitate of this Example, but the Readiness
of hearkning to the Voice of God, either speaking
to their Hearts by secret good Suggestions, and Re-
membrances of their Offences, or to their Ears, by
the Reproofs of his Holy Word, or by his Prophet
warning them to Repentance and Amendment. And
they who will do this, and with Sincerity and true
Contrition humbly confess their Sins before God, re-
solve to leave them presently, and by his Grace, live
in his Fear, and a careful Obedience for the future
shall hear the Word of God pronounced to their
Ears by the Prophet *Nathan*, and confirm'd to their
Hearts by Faith in the Blood of Jesus Christ, *The*
Lord hath put away thy Sins, thou shalt not die.





S E R M O N X.

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

A T

St. P A U L's,

AUGUST 19. 1708.

EZEKIEL Chap. XXXVI. Ver. 32.

*Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God,
be it known unto you : Be asham'd and con-
founded for your own ways, O House of Israel.*

THE Prophet is, in this Chapter, commanded
by God to comfort the People and Land of
Israel with the News of the Destruction of the Hea-
ren, who spitefully used them, and insulted over
them,

them, in their Misfortunes; and with the Blessings of God, promis'd unto them: And to tell them moreover, That as they had been rejected for their Sins, so they should be restor'd without their Deserts: And lastly, what Use they ought to make of these his Favours. *Thus saith the Lord God, Because the Enemy hath said against you, Aha, even the ancient High Places are ours in Possession; therefore prophesy and say, Surely in the Fire of my Jealousy have I spoken against the Residue of the Heathen which have appointed my Land unto their Possession with the Joy of all their Heart, with despiteful Minds to cast it out for a Prey. I have lifted up my Hand surely the Heathen that are about you, they shall bear their Shame. But ye, O Mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your Branches, and yield the Fruit to my People of Israel, for they are at hand to come; for behold I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and will multiply upon you Man and Beast; and they shall increase and bring forth Fruit, and I will settle you after your old Estate, and will do better with you than at your Beginnings, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. But because Men are exceeding apt to overvalue themselves; lest the Jews should vainly imagine that God remov'd these Evils from them, and promis'd them these Blessings for their own sakes the Prophet is commanded farther to undeceive them, and tell them plainly, ver. 17. That God punish'd them, and gave them up to their Enemies deservedly, and for their Sins, which they forsook not in their Sufferings, but profan'd his Holy Name among the Heathen; and therefore could not in Reason think, that they deserv'd to be deliver'd by him. But, lest they should, he tells them, ver. 22. *Thus saith the Lord God, I do not this for your sakes* and then goes on to tell them what Blessings he will farther bestow upon them; and in ver. 31. tell them*

them how they should improve these Favours. *Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, for your Iniquities, and for your Abominations.* And then follow the Words of the Text, which seem to comprize the whole Matter again: *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: Be asham'd and confounded for your own ways, O House of Israel.* Of which Words, the Uses we may make at this Time, are these. *First*, To consider, that tho' God never punishes a Nation, but when it deserves it at his Hands, yet he often blesses a Nation when it does not deserve it. *Be it known unto you, saith the Lord God, not for your sakes do I this,* i. e. deliver you from Evils, and promise you Blessings. *Secondly*, That the Sense of these undeserv'd Favours should work upon Mens Hearts, and stir them up the rather to Repentance---- *Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O House of Israel.*

I. That God does never punish or afflict a Nation, but it deserves it at his Hands, is agreed upon most universally; because no body can conceive otherwise, without conceiving him unjust, which contradicts both the natural and reveal'd Notions we have of him, which set him forth as the most perfect, excellent, and useful Being; and therefore one that can have no Temptation to Injustice, much less can arbitrarily be unjust, or punish without Cause and Provocation; which would not only destroy the Nature of Justice, but even the End and Design of Punishment, which is not only to afflict Offenders, but to terrify and discourage People from offending. God's Punishments are always for a good End, for Illustration of his Power, to declare his Hatred of Sin, and to deter others from sinning. Now the

Power of God is manifested in punishing; but to shew his Hatred of Sin withal, he must only shew his Power in punishing *Sinners*; and if the Exercise of this Power is to deter others from sinning, it can only do it by punishing *Sinners*. Every thing helps to shew, that a Nation or People is never punished by God, but it deserves it at his Hands; for God can do nothing unjust, nor punish undeservedly; nor have we any other way of judging of his Power, than by our natural Notions of his Justice and Goodness, with the concordant Declarations of his Will in Revelation.

But God does often bless a Nation and People, when they deserve it not; which is the other Part of the Proposition, and full as certain as the first. To this we can all of us bear full Testimony, and evidence its Truth, by the many and great Favours we continually receive at God's Hands, which we may well acknowledge *undeserved*, not out of our Humility and Modesty, but in great Truth and Justice; and unless it were so, there could be no room for Mercy and Favour. To deserve Evil, and receive Good, is as necessary to the Illustration of God's Mercy, as to deserve Evil, is to the Justification of his Righteousness when he punishes. A Man can no more be *pardoned*, than he can be *punished*, without Fault: And therefore, as our Offences vindicate God's Justice, so do they also illustrate his Mercy and Forgiveness. And tho' we must not therefore sin, *that Grace may abound*, yet without Sin, 'tis sure that Grace could not abound; for there would be no need of it, as it is taken for God's Free Mercy and Forgiveness of our Sins, by the Blood of *Jesus Christ*.

And as it is, with regard to our Spiritual Concerns, to the Gifts and Graces of God, and the Forgiveness of our Sins; so is it also with respect to our Temporal

poral ones, to the Blessings and Favours he bestows on Men in this Life; they are all of them undeserv'd; Marks of his Goodness, not the Rewards of any Merit on our part. *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you.* And tho' there is no doubt but God hath secret Reasons, strong and good, for these Proceedings, yet need we not be solicitous of knowing what they are; for every one is satisfy'd, no one disputes or murmurs about Favours; both God and Man may shew Compassion without Restraint, and on what Terms they please; for no one is thereby injur'd; no one is free to do another the least Mischief, but all the Good he can, or will. Acts of *Justice* are always *necessary*, and therefore under Laws and Rules; and Men cannot shew as much or as little as they please, but as much as is reasonable and fit in the Cases before them; but Acts of *Favour* are always *voluntary*, and therefore left at large for Men to do them as they please, either more less. And therefore, there is no Difficulty of understanding, and assenting to what God says to *Moses*, (as it is cited by *St. Paul*, Rom. ix. 15.) *I will have Mercy on whom I will have Mercy, and I will have Compassion on whom I will have Compassion*; for no body is hurt by as much Mercy and Compassion as can be shewn: Here is no exercise of a Power that People tremble under, but of one that all Mankind rejoices in, and cares not how far it is extended.

We are all of us fit for undeserv'd Favours; and if God should deal with us according to our Righteousness and Innocence in his Eye-sight, tho' one Man would be happier than another, yet even the best would be but miserable.

But because the Text especially refers to Blessings National and Common, and we are met by publick Order, to commemorate with Thankfulness to God
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the *Blessings* that we have received, all other private Considerations must give way on this Occasion.

The Text would very well allow me to recount the many great Deliverances that God hath wrought for us, in the several Days of our Distress; and the many amazing Successes he hath bless'd us with from time to time, for many Generations, as well against our Enemies abroad, as the Disturbers of our Peace at home.

The *Reformation* of Religion at the first, from so much Superstition and Corruption, as had overspread its Face ---- The awakening of the Nation to the Light and Truth of *Christ's* Gospel, after so long and so profound a Sleep in Ignorance and Error --- The *Restoration* of the Royal Family, and of the Government both in Church and State, after a long unnatural War, and the total Subversion of them both, and settling all Things on their old Foundations ---- The *Revolution*, that secur'd again our Church and State, when their Foundations were again shaken ---- These so great and universal Blessings, would not be here improperly insisted on, when we are counting up the Instances of God's Favour and Mercy to our Nation; and when we set our selves to consider, we never can forget them; nor remember them without great Gratitude and Praise. But these would call for much more Time and Patience than I can look for upon this Occasion; I know not if I should be now permitted to number up distinctly the Blessings of even so small a Part (I hope) of the *Present Reign*, as is already pass'd: They have been many in their Weight and Number, and have been each of them consider'd in their proper Season; and if the Mention of them now may but excite one short and transient Act of Praise and Thankfulness to God within your Minds, I shall not think I have neglected them.

Nor

Nor does the present Year want to recall the former ones, to furnish us with Matter for Thanksgiving both for *Deliverance*, and for *Victory* : Sufficient to it are the Blessings of it.

The insolent Attempt of *France* upon the Nation in the Spring, was so soon and easily defeated, that it hardly gave us time to apprehend any Danger from it : And even upon the soberest Recollection, if we might judge only by what appears, it seems to have deserv'd the general *Scorn* it was receiv'd withal. To see a Prince grown old in artful Wiles, and deep Contrivances, forming a Project of so vast Extent, and of the most momentous Consequence to all *Europe*,--- and seconding it with Means so disproportion'd, and ill fitted to their End--- yet so assur'd of its Success---, is one of the most amazing Transactions of the Age we live in; which yet has been exceeding fruitful of Strange Things.

To think a Kingdom of so great a Compass, wealthy beyond all Imagination, flourishing in Trade, powerful in Fleets and Armies, most tender of its Liberties, tenacious of its Laws, and Customs, and Religion, and (for their sakes, as well as for her own) almost an Idolizer of its *Queen*--- should tamely, on the sudden, surrender all these Blessings and Advantages in Exchange for a detested Superstition, Poverty, and Chains, under the Rule of One, whom they neither love, nor fear, nor know --- and this to be effected by a Force which heretofore would scarcely have reduc'd an *English Nobleman*--- may pass, upon the Reputation of the former Winter-Councils, and the usual Precaution of its great Contriver, for a *well-laid Design* : But sure, with Us, who know our Selves, our Interests, and our Inclinations, and who have seen the Issue, it must for ever pass for a *most vain, ill-grounded Undertaking*.

See if I must not treat it in this manner, or be oblig'd to lay an unsupportable and everlasting Weight of Guilt and Infamy on some of our Fellow-Subjects, who must encourage, and invite, and promise to assist this strange Attempt.

And may it not as soon be believ'd, that a Prince, declining fast in Years; wasted, perhaps, a little in Understanding, by a long, close, and fix'd Attention to Affairs of great Importance and Variety, and by most constant Labours of the Mind, as well as by a long luxurious Course of Living--- vain and ambitious beyond all Example--- pleas'd to hear, and capable of believing the grossest Flatteries--- is it not full as easy to imagine, that such a Prince might be, for once, infatuated, and form most wild Designs--- as that a Multitude of Men, (for without Multitude the Attempt would be but Madness) born in a Country of great *Liberty*, professing the *Reform'd Religion*, and bound to their Sovereign by many sacred and tremendous *Oaths*, should now, against Humanity and Honour, against all Sense of Conscience, Duty, and Religion, join with our implacable and most inveterate Enemy, to bring them all to Desolation and Destruction, and fill the Land with Misery and Blood?

It would be Matter of *Thanksgiving*, to have been deliver'd from so much Mischiefe, as even so small an Army might have done amongst a People so defenceless, and so ill-provided to withstand them; and to have disappointed an Attempt, that must have taken up Time, and Men, who would have been employ'd much better in another Place; and which might possibly have interrupted the Publick Operations for a Season, and consequently have prevented even the Occasion of assembling here this Day. But to give Thanks for a Deliverance from within our selves, from Men of such unnatural Wickedness, and Malice very near infernal, as those must needs have

have been, who call'd for and encourag'd this Attempt, is a thing that would have enter'd last into one's Thoughts; and it may be, not at all, had we not been authentically taught to think so.

We have indeed a Party of *good Catholics* within us, from whom we neither do, nor ought to expect less than a secret Inclination to our Enemies at all times; nor less than open Combination with them, when 'tis seasonable and safe. But these profess their Enmity, and We, in our abundant Lenity, forgive and suffer them; because they hate us upon Principles, and must destroy us when they can; and we are well aware of it: But that our Liberties, Estates, Religion, and our Lives, should be offer'd up by such as profess themselves *Reformed*, and live among us as our *Friends*, is a Thing that is, in Theory, almost incredible.

One would, in truth, be somewhat slower to believe such villanous Designs could enter into Peoples Hearts, that this Attempt might not take Effect in any Branch of it; one of which was, doubtless, to create as many Fears, and Jealousies, and mutual Distrusts betwixt us, as could be towards one another; that we might not know who were our Friends, whom to converse withal, nor where to place any Trust or Confidence.

But we must blot out all our charitable Schemes, when once we are assur'd in Fact, that there were many from within, that must invite, encourage, and abet these Enemies of God, our Queen, and Government, our Laws and our Religion: Upon this Score, the Blessing of God upon our Publick Councils, in disappointing this *Invasion*, is made deservedly a Matter of *Thanksgiving*.

Our Enemies were, surely, in good earnest, when they order'd Publick Prayers, and expos'd their Holy Sacrament in all their Churches, to implore a Blessing on this Undertaking; and their *High-Priest* him-
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self

self thought fit to offer up his Intercessions with Solemnity, to interest all the Saints and Angels in the Enlargement of his Empire, and returning us again to Spiritual Bondage, by virtue of a Temporal Conquest; of which, it seems, they doubted but a little. Want of Success is never singly to determine of the Virtue of Men's Prayers; let God alone (as He alone is worthy) be the *Object*, and let the *Matter* of them be but fit and lawful, and the good *Mind* intense and fervent in delivering them; the Prayers will then be good, whatever be the Issue. But every thing convinces us, these Prayers have not ascended up to God with Favour and Acceptance; however, I could wish, that we would learn from them, to be as zealous in a better Cause; and be as hearty in our Thanks for our Deliverances, as They were in earnest in their Prayers for our Destruction. *Let them give Thanks whom the Lord hath redeemed, and delivered from the Hand of the Enemy.*

Let us now turn a little to the other Reason of Thanksgiving, for which we are assembled here this Day.

We had, indeed, formed (at our Ease) so many fine Schemes, and drawn so many gay Conclusions from the Success that had so often attended our victorious Arms, that finding them slip away (as it were) from between our Hands, without their imaginary Fruits, we began to sink into I know not what Spirit of Despondency; and grew *uneasy*, if not *fearful*. 'Tis a great Misfortune to a People, this, that they cannot only not withdraw their Eyes from one unhappy Day, in so many happy Years; but cannot be content with *doing nothing*, (as they wrongly call it) altho' they in the mean time *suffer nothing*. This Temper may, some time or other, cost them dear, by forcing wise and brave Men to

precipitate Affairs, against their Judgment, and the Reason of Things, whatever the Issue is like to be.

The Year, the People think, is quite lost, that does not bring the *Queen* to this good Place, to render up her Thanks to God for some great *Victory*. That, to be sure, is the Desire of Her's, and all our Hearts; but wise Men mingle with their Zeal and Prayers, the Consideration of the Uncertainties of War; the strange and unexpected Turns that now and then Affairs take; the many Accidents (and sometimes very small and inconsiderable ones) that overthrow Designs laid with the greatest Prudence, Secrecy, and Caution; and break the best-concerted Measures in the World; and thank God heartily for what Success he gives, but are not over-much surpriz'd, nor grow impatient at their Disappointments. All that the wisest of the Sons of Men can do, is, to *design* with Reason and Probability; and pitch on *Means* most suitable, and likely to attain their End; but for the *Event*, that is not in their Hands, nor are they answerable for it.

The Posture of our Affairs at present, God be praised, wants not this, nor any such Apology; the Event has answer'd fully to the End and Means propos'd and us'd: But had it not, the Overflowings of this froward Humour had not, I doubt, been stopp'd by these Excuses; which yet, are such as Reason, Experience, and most constant Observation, furnish all Men with, that give themselves leave to consider.

These Murmurs will be now, 'tis likely, drowned in the triumphant Noise and Joy of *Victory*; and many Discontents, and ill Affections, quieted by our Success. But they who love their Country, would be better pleas'd to see Men act upon more reasonable and noble Principles; that the Ease of Governors, and Peace of Governments, might not depend
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on any such Uncertainties ; nor They who with incessant Labours, watch for our Security at home ; nor They who with the greatest Toils, and utmost Hazard, fight for us abroad, owe all their Praise, their Honour, and Reward, if not their Safety, to such doubtful Issues as the Defeat of Armies, and the taking strong Towns, needs must be. In a word, they are unhappy Ministers of Peace and War, who please not by their Prudence, Vigilance, and admirable Management ; by their Activity, their Courage, Conduct, and all other proper Qualities, without *Events astonishingly happy*. Let us send home these barbarous Maxims to the *East*, from whence, in an evil Hour, we fetch'd them.

Not to satisfy our Impatience, or any loose, ill-grounded Expectations, but to fulfil some great good Purpose of his own, it hath pleas'd God, this Summer, to crown *Her Majesty's* Arms, and those of Her *Allies*, with great Success, against an Army, strong and numerous, and made up of the Flower of Armies, with all the Advantages of Ground and Situation, under a *General* of great Fame and Honour, excited to make good the mighty Hopes conceiv'd of him, by the Presence of the most illustrious *Sons of France*, who were to owe their future Glories to his wise Lessons, and his brave Example ; no small Encouragement to great and noble Undertakings.

To meet these Difficulties, nothing under God but *British Forces*, were believ'd sufficient. And what will not they perform, inspir'd with a good Cause, and with the Love and Honour of their *Queen* and *Country*, and led by a *Commander* whom they love to follow, still to rescue from the extreme Hazards ? And gladly they will hazard every thing to preserve a Life with which each Soldier of the Army thinks his own is fast bound.

By lucky Accident, they were at this time more in heart than usually in other Battels, by having at their Head a *Princely Captain*, whom both in giving Orders, and in Heat of Fight, they might not unhappily mistake for *their own*; so that they seem'd to have their *General* always in their Sight, when yet that *General* was, as usually, in every Place of Danger.

'Tis no great Wonder, when we hear such Forces, so Commanded, under such Excitements, should march to meet their Enemies with as much Speed as others fly from them; and when they had overtaken them, should quite forget their painful Day, and fight as if they had risen from Sleep, and all Refreshment. Had not the Sun gone down, Excess of Courage had destroy'd them like an Enemy; no Human Strength could have sustain'd such Toil much longer; too many of them must have sunk under the Labours of Pursuit and Slaughter: The Darkness was as needful to those brave Men, as to the Fugitives before them.

Let the Vain-glorious Enemy now dispute the Victory: The *Princes*, and the *General*, and the *Army* fled, except a few that stood, to make the others Flight securer. Those Princes would not have begun their *Race of Honour* with mistaking of the Goal, and running backwards, had *Victory* been with them; nor would the *General's* Orders have been dated from a Place, where neither Friends nor Enemies expected him, but by Necessity; nor will the wisest After-game convince us, that his Flight was not precipitate and forc'd; nor will the *Army* be diminish'd less than many Thousands of their Morning-Number; nor shew any other Spoils and Ensigns of a *Victory*, than what will rather look like bought or stoln, than won in Field of Battel.

*May all your Enemies, GREAT QUEEN,
for ever be Victorious, in this manner.*

The Place I stand in, forbids me all Approaches even to suspicious Praise, much more to any thing beyond; nor am I under any manner of Temptation to supply, with want of Truth, what should be fitly said on this Occasion. I shall be greatly wanting to my Subject; but that, at this Time, is more like to oppress than fail me: But, happily for me, the Nation has prevented me; I cannot say a Word upon this great Occasion, but I must borrow it from some of our most zealous, faithful Fellow-Subjects. Whether it were to felicitate her Majesty, upon the Unanimity of her *Army*; which, tho' made up of many Nations, did yet, with an ambitious Emulation, all conspire in trying who should do their Duty best, and merit most her Favour: Or whether, in particular, to give due Honour to that High-born *Prince*, who, by his noble Ardour, and adventrous Courage, hath convinc'd them, He deserves to be *the Hope* (but distant Hope) of *Great Britain*; and who (they promise to themselves) shall Forty, Fifty Summers hence, lead forth their Armies, if this Triumphant Reign shall leave their Children any Enemies: Or whether it were to repeat the important Labours of Her most valiant, wise, and fortunate *Commander*, crown'd with fresh Lawrels every other Year; because, it seems, they wither faster in our unkindly Climate, than elsewhere: Or, the incredible Alacrity with which the *Officers and Troops* advanc'd to fight the Enemy; the Strength and Fury with which they fought; and their Humanity, in sparing those that could be spar'd. How, in a word, Her *High Allies*, as well as Her brave Subjects, have behav'd themselves, just as they would

would have done, could but *Her Majesty* (encompass'd with good Angels) have been by, to look upon, to animate, to praise them, and reward them.

I should but very faintly reiterate what the Publick Voice hath said already on this glorious Action; but it becomes me just to mention these Particulars, because they were the happy Instruments it pleas'd God to use, in giving that *Success*, which brings us to His Temple at this Time, to render him our hearty Praises for it.

Happy for us, in the next Place, if we could as clearly discern, that we had put our selves into the Way of deserving these great Favours, as that we wanted them, and have received them! But there the Text will still be true, and truly applicable, as in its first Instance----*Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you.* We may, perhaps, imagine, that these Blessings are the Rewards of our Deserts; when we forget our selves, we may imagine so; but when we look about, to see where these deserving People live, whether in *Court*, or *Camp*, in *City*, or in *Country*, we shall change our Minds, and find we are preserv'd, as *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* might have been, by some few righteous Ones among us; or blessed, when we are blessed, not to *Reward*, but to *Encourage* us to do our Duty.

Did ever Fair Example shine at *Court* with so small Influence! where every body praises what they will not imitate; as if they were so dazzled with its Lustre, that they rather lost their Way, than were directed by it; so that it serves only to greater Condemnation. Was ever less Devotion in Peoples Hearts, if we may judge by its Appearance in their outward Gestures in the House of God, where even good Breeding will not now secure that good Behaviour, Silence and Attention, which Conscience of

the Heavenly Presence, Reverence of the Place, and Company, and Hope of Benefit, did heretofore secure? I stand not on *Externals*, tho' I know *Externals* must preserve the Substance of *Religion*; Religion is itself much out of Countenance, and loses Ground continually: Mens Practices, tho' very naught, do hardly now belye their Principles, their Principles are so corrupted. The most important Truths of Christianity, are attack'd with Insolence and great Rudeness by every petulant and idle Writer; its Ordinances all decry'd, and huge Contempt pour'd daily on its Ministers. This impious License may, for the present, please a sceptical and loose Generation; but it can never long go well with such a People. Was ever Infidelity and Breach of *Matrimonial Contract* more avowed, and less regarded? These perjur'd People are not now at the Trouble of concealing their Falshood from their injur'd Partners; it seems to make part of their Pleasure and their Greatness, to wrong them openly, in Defiance both of God and Man: 'Tis Modesty, and almost Virtue in this Age, to be a little secret in these bad Affairs.

It may be, 'tis not thought a *Fault* with some, to pass away the whole Life, as it were, in one continued *Revel*; nor that *Excess* is any thing, because it is the Work of every Day; nor that *intemperate Gaming* will be reckon'd for, tho' it consume more Time than all the Business of their Life besides takes up; and more Money than ever was expended by them on good Uses; nay, tho' it hinder them from giving up those Hours they owe to God, and serious Recollection, and doing those good Deeds, which they would otherwise incline to do, and which their Abilities and Condition would require of them. This is a growing Mischief with us, and daily wastes up many noble Patrimonies, defrauds

the Servant of his Wages, and the Labourer of his Hire, *i. e.* occasions much Injustice, by disabling Men from paying their just Debts, and doing what becomes them, even to Wives and Children, and Relations, and Dependants. The great Oppression and Corruption of Offices and Officers, will be a less disputed Matter of Complaint, for the Cry thereof is great and general; nor does it much avail us, that the *Masters* are as honourable and virtuous as *Elisha*, if their *Retainers* are as greedy and corrupt as *Gebazi* was.

The Time would fail me to speak to these, and many more Abominations, that almost over-run the Kingdom: But I may not make it a Day of Reproach and Shame, which is a Day of Gladness and Thanksgiving. Only behold the Disposition we are in to receive these mighty Favours at God's Hands! And think how truly it is said, *Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you.*

But what we thus deny to our unworthy selves, we may, I hope, in part, attribute to the *Cause* that we defend. We cannot be too little assur'd of our own Deserts, nor yet too much, that we have Justice on our Side; for without this, we could not seek the Blessing of God, nor hardly thank him for Success. But if a Cause can be just, without any Scruple or Exception, sure, it must be the Maintenance of the *Common Liberty*; and an Attempt to hinder haughty and ambitious Spirits from being in a Condition to oppress the World about them, and enslave them at their Pleasure: And all the World has Reason to be concern'd for a Cause that pleads its Liberty, and to rejoice in the Success that lays Impediments in the Ways of such destructive and unjust Designs. And I do not know that God can be invoc'd to assist an Enterprize more pleasing in his Sight, than the rescuing People from this dreadful Yoke, or the prevent-

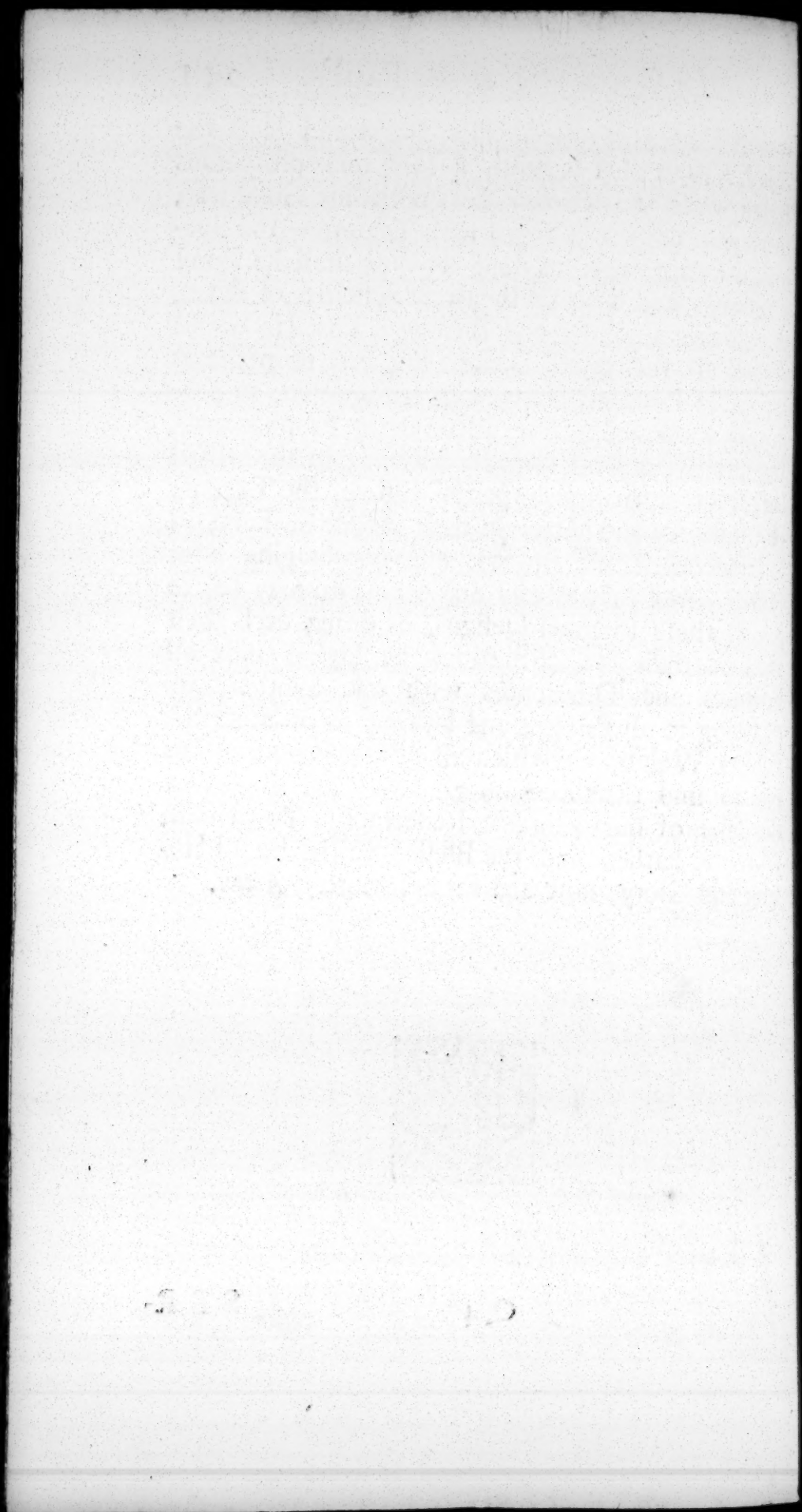
preventing them from coming under it. If any one thing be more his Hatred and Aversion than another, it must needs be the Author of unjust destroying War, that disturbs the Peace of Mankind, and brings such Desolation on the Earth, and such an endless Train of all sorts of Evils with it. Success against such Undertakings, is what we may most reasonably ask at God's Hands; as reasonably expect, but yet not claim as due by Promise, or in Justice; and when it follows, may as reasonably presume it comes from God, as any thing besides; and consequently may with all Sincerity return Him Thanks for it: And could our Gratitude but equal the Favours we have indeed receiv'd at God's Hands, we should, in this Point, be a very happy People.

But all that we can do, with respect to what is past, or to prepare our selves for what we farther want, and pray for ---- will be, to attend to what the Prophet says in the following Words, *Be ashamed and confounded for your own Ways, O House of Israel*, and let the Sense of all these undeserved Favours, lead us to Consideration, and Repentance, and Amendment.

II. We should, if we consider Matters rightly, be content rather to be reclaim'd from Sin, and deliver'd from its Punishment by rigorous and severe Infirmities, and the heaviest Judgments, than not at all. But we shall be without Excuse, if we neglect to use his Mercies to this End and Purpose; and take Occasion from them to resolve to qualify and fit our selves a great deal better for them, than we heretofore have done. This is so plain and fitting for us to do, that I will trust it to the Reason of every one who hears me, without any farther Exhortation; and conclude, as I believe you will be all well pleas'd to do with me, with offering up most earnest

earnest Prayers to God, That He would bless the *QUEEN*, and *Us*, with a long and prosperous Reign over us; Crown her with his Goodness; mark out her many Years with Triumphs and Successes, like to this, as long as War shall be found necessary; and with all the sweet Felicities of Peace, when Peace shall be our Blessing: That He would favour all the good Designs She has to make us happy, in Love and Unity with one another, in promoting Piety and Virtue, discouraging Prophaneness, Immorality, and all ungodly License; in the Distribution of equal and impartial Justice, the Exercise of Clemency and Mercy in their proper Seasons; in securing our Trade Abroad, and encouraging it at Home. And that all Her Subjects Care may be, to second these so good Designs, by doing each their Duty in their several Stations, by laying aside all Enmities and Differences with one another, renouncing to all Parties, and uniting to promote the Publick Welfare, in which all private People will be sure to find their Account at last. And all this for the sake of our adorable Redeemer: To whom, with the Father, and the Blessed Spirit, be all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. *Amen.*







S E R M O N XI.

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N,

A T

St. JAMES's,

On SUNDAY, April 17. 1709.

St. Matth. Ch. XXVII. Ver. 24, 25.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a Tumult was made, he took Water, and washed his Hands before the Multitude, saying, I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person; see ye to it. Then answered all the People, and said, His Blood be on us, and on our Children.

IT appears from these Words, and from the other Evangelists, that *Pilate* had really taken some Pains, and used some Art, to deliver *Jesus* from

from the Persecution of the Priests, and the Rage of the People, who sought, he knew not why, his Death; or at least, to acquit his Hands of him. He heard his Accusation, and found it frivolous, and therefore bad them--- *take him, and judge him according to their own Law*, John xviii. 31. He examin'd himself this dangerous Criminal, and yet declared --- *he found no Fault in him*, even after he had owned he was a King, Luke xxiii. 4. He put them in Mind himself of the Custom they had, to have a Prisoner, whomsoever they desired, deliver'd to them at the Feast of the *Passover*; and would have had them chosen this *Jesus*, King of the *Jews*, to be the Man, John xviii. 39. He puts *Barabbas* in Nomination with him, one that was a Murderer and a Robber, in hopes ('tis likely) to determine them, by such an odious and abhorr'd Comparison, to pitch on *Jesus*. There were, no question, many Malefactors in their Prisons; *Barabbas* had many Accomplices that lay bound with him (*Mark* xv. 7.) for Insurrection; but he alone had committed Murder in that Insurrection: This Villain, above all, he fixes on, to see if that could move them to prefer *Jesus* of *Nazareth* to him, for the Prisoner that he must deliver. He took occasion of sending him to *Herod*, from hearing he was a *Galilean*, to rid his Hands of him; and when that would not do, he again bespeaks the Rulers and the People, Luke xxiii. 14. *You have brought this Man unto me as one that perverteth the People, and behold, I having examin'd him before you, have found no fault in him, touching those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him, and to nothing worthy of Death is done unto him; I will therefore chastise him, and release him.* No Judge could shew more Marks of a Disposition to acquit a Prisoner, than *Pilate* here shew'd: One may see him almost partial
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in the matter; not against Justice, (for he knew *there was no Cause of Death found in him, and knew besides they had deliver'd him for Envy*) but against the outrageous Clamours of the Priests and Multitude. 'Tis not unlikely, that his very scourging him was with a merciful Intention of sparing his Life: He would proceed to such a Punishment, to countenance their Accusation, or to appease their present Rage; thinking, it may be, they would now be satisfy'd, and in some little Space of Time relent, and fall from their violent Resolution of having him crucify'd. He suffered him to be crown'd with Thorns, and expos'd in a Purple Robe, and with a Reed for a Sceptre; and to be treated with all the Scorn and Insolence, and cruel Contempt, that a Pretender to those Honours might expect from a mad Multitude and common Soldiers, encourag'd to it by their Governors and Leaders. This Usage, and this Sight, he thought might satiate their Ill nature, and move some Pity in them; and when he found it would not operate that way, but that they cried out *Crucify* the louder, he said (what he should have remembred) *Take ye him, and crucify him, for I find no fault in him*: but then they were more instant than before, and cried out--- *Let him be Crucify'd*.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a Tumult was made ---; when he saw that all the artful Pains which he had taken, all the Excuses he had made, the Arguments he had used, the Diversions and Delays he had sought out, and the downright Denials he had given them ---; when he saw that nothing of all this would do, but that the Multitude was more incensed, and that instead of hearkning to him, and remitting somewhat of their Claim, they were rather like to force him from his Hands, and fall into Sedition, and set the City in an
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Uproar ---, he submitted to those Fears that sometimes fall, in some degree, upon a brave and constant Man, that has to deal with Multitudes ---; he yielded to the sad Necessity of giving up the Life of a private Person to the Tranquillity and Safety (as he imagined) of the Publick. But that he might do it with the better Grace---, *He took Water, and washed his Hands before the Multitude, saying, I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person; see ye to it.* He would intimate hereby, that as that Water cleansed his Hands from any Foulness they might have contracted, so should the Protestation of the Force and Fear he was under, declare him innocent, and acquit his Conscience of whatever Guilt might be contracted by the Death of that just Man who stood before him, and whose Blood they resolv'd to have. He, for his part, declar'd him *Innocent*, and was willing to let him go; they, by their Clamours, dreadful and importunate, and threatening Tumult and Confusion, would not let him act as Reason and Justice bid he should; let it therefore lie on them; let them, who by their mutinous Rage, obstructed Justice, answer for it--- *See ye to it.* There is therefore in these Words, *First*, A Declaration of Christ's Innocence, and of his own; and a throwing the Guilt of his Condemnation on the Priests and People--- *I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person; see ye to it.* *Secondly*, The Priests and People take this Guilt upon themselves---, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children.*

First, Pilate here acknowledges Christ's Innocence, in calling him a *just Person*. Judas, who had attended on him during his publick Ministry, came and acknowledged he had sinned, in betraying *the innocent Blood*. Pilate's Wife had sent to him,
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when sitting in Judgment, to warn him of having any hand in punishing *that just Man*, and now himself declares he was a *just Person*. Thus St. Peter reminds the *Jews*, That *they denied the Holy One, and the Just, and desired a Murderer to be granted to them*, Acts iii. 14. Thus St. Stephen tells them --- *they had slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom they had been the Betrayers and Murderers*, Acts vii. 52. And thus saith Ananias to Saul --- *The God of our Fathers hath chosen Thee, that thou shouldst know his Will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the Voice of his Mouth*, xxii. 14. Pilate, 'tis likely, by *just Person*, understood no more than a Man that was innocent of the Crimes of which he was accus'd ; but his Wife must use that Word providentially ; and, surely, by divine Appointment, since you see the Scripture-writers use it so remarkably, and with particular Distinction, as including the whole Character of Christ: And thus St. Peter, *Christ hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring us to God*. Nor did the Malefactor know how great a Truth he spoke, when he said of Christ, then dying by his Side --- *This Man hath done nothing amiss* --- nor did he understand how necessary it was, that what he said should be exactly true. He did not know his Neighbour-Cross was then the Altar, on which the Priest was offering up himself a Sacrifice to God for the Sins of all Mankind ; that this his Fellow-sufferer was *the Lamb of God* (spotless and innocent) *that taketh away the Sins of the World*: And that *such an High Priest became us*, was indeed not only *fit*, but absolutely *necessary* for us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from Sinners* --- not separate from them in his Life ; for he convers'd most freely with them, and came to call them to Repentance ; nor separate from them in his Death,

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for *he was numbred with them*; but separated so, as never to be tainted or defiled with Sin. Such an High Priest befitted our Condition; we stood in need of such an Holy One, to offer up such a spotless Sacrifice, not for his own, but for our Sins, to propitiate God, procure our Pardon, to enter into Heaven, and there to make continual Intercession for us; which he could not have done, had he at any time *done any thing amiss*; had he not been in *all* Respects, what *Pilate* could but mean in *some* --- *a just Person*.

But if he were thus *Just*, why will this Governor condemn him? How can he join these two Things, *I am innocent of the Blood of this just Person*, when he is going to doom to Crucifixion that just Person? If he be *Just*, why must he die? If he must die, tho' *Just*, how should the Man be *innocent* who condemns him to Death? He *was* not innocent, his Declaration only shewed he *would* be innocent if he could: A little would serve to wash his *Hands*, but all the Waters in the World could not clear his *Conscience* of all Guilt, who being a Judge, would yield to the Clamours of an incensed Multitude, and condemn a Man he thought was innocent, and could not forbear declaring so with all Solemnity. A Magistrate is certainly oblig'd, tho' under never so great Constraint and Fears, to do what he should do were he at perfect Liberty. This appears from hence, that a Man's Heart reproaches him with having prefer'd his own Security, against Justice, to that of an innocent Person. He has sav'd himself, but he has lost another, whom he was certainly oblig'd to save: He has bought his own Security, at the Expence of another's Ruin; this he likes not, this he wishes had not passed. This is a hard Lesson to learn, to prefer another's Safety before our own; but they who undertake great Offices, and to do publick Justice, to right the Wrong'd, and to help

help the Oppressed, must undertake them on these Hazards: They are not express Conditions, but still implied, because the End of their Institution could not constantly be answered without such Venture. But what must *Pilate* do in such Distress? Must he hazard, for the sake of a poor despised Stranger, the Peace and Quiet of his People, the Confusion of his Government, it may be Loss of it, and *Cæsar's* Favour, rather than yield to the united Desires of the Rulers and the People to give that Stranger up? 'Tis easy for People that are at Liberty, and unconcern'd, to sit at home and determine what is just and right, and fit to be done, and to pronounce decisively upon the Matter. But 'tis another thing to find one's self under Fears and great Constraint, encircled with Crowds of a mad, enrag'd People, excited to Clamour and Importunity by their leading Masters and Rulers, both Secular and Spiritual, whose Skill and Judgment they depend upon, and whose Authority is sacred with them. A firmer Man than *Pontius Pilate* might in such Circumstances go aside out of the way of strict Justice, and be patient of submitting to what his Conscience could not chuse or like, were he at Liberty: His Case will therefore always meet with Pity, tho' with Blame also. The *Jews*, he had tried upon more Occasions than one, were the most furious, obstinate, and mad Multitude he had ever seen; quickly provok'd, dispos'd to Mutiny, and ready to take Arms, and hard to be appeas'd and quell'd when up: And he now saw them in a Disposition to Tumult the most forward, kindled into a strange Rage, and ready for Revolt upon their Leaders Call, which a little farther Provocation might endanger. And how would he answer that to *Cæsar*, to endanger the setting on Fire a whole Province, for the sake of a little Injustice, or keeping his Conscience quiet?

quiet? Would those Excuses do at Rome? Would they not bid him learn of *Caiaphas* --- *That it was expedient that one Man should die, rather than the whole Nation be endanger'd*? I do not mean by this, to excuse this Man for complying with the unreasonable and wicked Importunities used with him, to condemn a Person whom he declared just and innocent; for he should have ventur'd himself in such a Case. And if Governors and Magistrates should be intimidated by Threats and Clamours, or great Hazards, to do what a Crowd of People should demand of them, without Regard to the Rules of Right and Just; if they should not be obliged to undergo all Hardships in executing their Offices, every body sees there would be an end of Order, Peace, and Government, and all Justice. If once the Multitude could find their Decrees submitted to, either to the sparing, or taking away the Lives of Men, they would never want Occasions of assembling; there would never be wanting wicked and designing People to stir them underhand to make their Claims, according as they found it to their Purpose. The greatest Criminals might go unpunish'd, and the greatest Innocence might not be safe. *Barabbas* here was to be pardon'd, and Christ must be condemn'd, only because the Multitude will have it so. These are the unavoidable Consequences of a Magistrate's yielding to the Clamours of a Rout, against his Rule, and against his Conscience; and if they have not often appear'd, it is because the Magistrates have not often yielded: Whenever they do, it will be so; and there can be no greater Demonstration of their Obligation to venture all Extremities, rather than condemn the Innocent, or acquit the Guilty, than the Certainty of this Consequence, That without such Venture, the Multitude will always govern, and no Man could, tho' never so innocent, and deserving, call his Estate,

or Liberty, or Life his own. But this is also an equal Demonstration of the Excellence and Usefulness of Government, and that just and steady Magistrates do very well deserve the Honours and the Recompences that are bestowed upon them.

Nothing can be of worser Consequence either to Governors or private People, than that the Assemblies of the Multitude for any publick Purposes should be encourag'd. The Noise of the Waves, and the Madness of the People, are alike dreadful, and alike dangerous, where they are let in; and deaf alike to all that you can offer.--- *I find no fault in this Man*---. No matter what you find, let him be Crucify'd. *Why, what Evil hath he done?* Then they redouble but their Cry, ---*Crucify him, Crucify him.* Some cunning People have sometimes served a present Turn by these Assemblies, and done no great Mischief; and when they are (as we call it) on our Side, we apprehend no Danger: But all the Odds in the World are on the other side; nor can the wisest, the most artful, powerful, and most popular Managers, warrant Security and Quiet for an Hour, their Heads are so quickly turn'd, and their Passions rais'd so easily. They are therefore to be repress'd by all the Means imaginable, and the Men that practise on them, to be held in the greatest Suspicion; they should be treated like those who break up Damms, let in the Seas, and drown a Country.

The Rulers and the Priests who stirred up the People *to ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus*, were certainly much more to blame than the People themselves, who made themselves their wicked Instruments. But the People were not without Fault, to be so stirred up; they have Reason and common Sense, as well as their Betters; and therefore shall answer to God for the Neglect or Abuse of it; they

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know they have nothing to do with publick Matters; they know they may not lie, nor accuse wrongfully, nor bear false Witness against their Neighbour; and yet they put themselves in the way of doing all these Things, when they suffer themselves to be excited by crafty and designing Men, to appear in Crowds, and publicly accuse, defame, and call for Justice against Persons that may, for ought they know, be innocent and blameless, and only traduced by common Fame and uncertain Rumours. What did these People know of Christ our Lord, but what was worthy of their Love, Esteem, and Admiration? That he taught Men to serve God, and love one another; that he cured Diseases, healed Sickneses, cast out Devils, and spent his publick Life *in going about and doing good*. But because the Priests and Rulers were against him, persecuted him, and sought his Life; and told them I know not how many frightful Stories of the hazardous Condition their Church and State was in, and what a dangerous Man this *Jesus of Nazareth* was, and that Things could never possibly go well whilst he was suffered to preach and live---they swallow all, and join their Voices with their Leaders, and desire his Crucifixion; altho' they knew themselves no Harm of him, and heard the *Roman* Governor (who had no Interest in his Life and Safety) tell them again and again--- *he found no fault in him*.

The Accusations of the Priests and Rulers would not have moved *Pilate*, 'tis likely, to condemn Christ; nor was it what the Multitude *affirmed* or *proved*, that moved him; but 'twas the Rage, the Importunity, and the Madness of their Cries, that threatned Mutiny, and Tumult, and Confusion of all, that constrain'd this fearful Governor to give him up, even when he was determin'd to let him go. Shall not the People answer for this? Shall all
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this go for nothing? All this shall not excuse the Governor; but it shall make the People guilty, in part, of Christ's Blood. They should have had their share of Guilt, had they not willingly cried out---*his Blood be upon us*; they drew it on themselves, by calling for his Death, because their Leaders bid them. *See ye to it*---will not excuse *Pilate*; but yet the People must see to it. *I have* (said *Judas* to the Priests) *betrayed the innocent Blood*---*What is that to us*, said the Priests to *Judas*, *see thou to that*. But yet it was to them, and a great deal too, to have encourag'd, dealt with, and agreed to hire that treacherous Servant. Mistake not; all that have their Hands in Wickedness, must see to it; but some have more, and some have lesser share in it; but every one too much by all, and every one must answer for it. 'Tis not so easy to wash out Guilt, as to contract it, or excuse it lightly. *Pilate* may say,--- I was constrain'd by Fears of Tumult and Disorders, that might possibly have occasion'd the Death of many People; But that will not excuse him, even to himself. The People may singly plead, they were but in the Crowd, and did as others did, call out for Crucifixion, without Malice, but as they were bid. Our Saviour told *Pilate*, that he who had deliver'd him into his Hands, had the *greater* Sin; but he, it seems, had *some*; and therefore was not excus'd for yielding to the Importunities of the Priests and People, against his Conscience; nor could the People be excus'd for calling for his Crucifixion, and putting that Force on *Pilate*. Thus Men bring Guilt on one another, but do not clear themselves. What therefore may be learn'd in general from hence, is, that as Magistrates, and such as undertake to do Justice, are to hazard their own Security, in order to discharge their Duty, and are not to be diverted from the right way, by Hope

or Fear, by Favour or Affection, nor will be excus'd by Threats and dreadful Apprehensions--- so neither must the People be excited by subtle and designing Men to gather into Routs; nor when they are there, be inspirited to meddle with publick Matters, defame, complain of, or accuse the Names that are put into their Heads, nor call for Justice, or Removal of they know not whom; for, however little Mischief they intend, they will be partly guilty, and partly answerable for what follows: They make themselves Instruments of mutinous, unjust, and cruel Spirits, and must give Account, as far as they are concern'd, in bringing their ill Designs to pass. There is nothing better for all private People, than to study to be quiet, and do their own Business, and let the publick Affairs be manag'd by those who are to look after them, and must be answerable for their Mischief. For see, *in the next place*, into how great Mischief these poor People of the *Jews* were plung'd, by being so unnecessarily busied, and underhand excited by their Leading Masters, this Day to *destroy Jesus*. The Governor would fain have let him go; this they are bid to exclaim against most furiously; and when this would not do, he calls for Water to wash his Hands of the Blood of that just Person--- and in a very solemn Manner (since Guilt must lie somewhere) would lay it upon *Them*, whose Importunity forced him, unwilling, to condemn him--- *See ye to it*. This they immediately took upon them--- *His Blood be upon us and our Children*--- the Guilt and Punishment be ours, if there be any due to this Desire of his Crucifixion; let us, and our Posterity, bear the Smart, and the Burthen of this Fault, if it be any. This was a great deal more than they intended, when either Zeal, or Idleness, or Curiosity, drew them out in the Morning: They came, 'tis possible, only to be Spectators of
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what would happen that Day ; but there, by Artifice, they were drawn in to be Petitioners, that Christ might die ; this they submitted to : And now when *Pilate* would not be guilty of the Blood of one whom he thought innocent, they will needs substitute themselves and their Posterity in his stead. This, you see, was plainly what they came not to engage in ; but fell into by a most unfortunate Opportunity, by being in ill Company, and in a Place where they had nothing to do. But what a strange and dreadful Imprecation was it ? Their Law had told them, God would certainly require the Blood of innocent People at the Hands of those who shed it. And did the Man whose Blood they were about to shed, appear as yet guilty ? They knew they had sought out Witnesses, and had suborned them to swear against him ; but after all, their Witnesses did not agree, so that he could not legally be found guilty ; and every Man is innocent, till he be legally found otherwise. What is it then but *Murther*, to desire his Death, even when the Laws acquit him ? And yet these Rulers who suborn'd these Witnesses, (which yet could not come home) call for the Guilt of Blood upon themselves and Children. Well ! 'tis a fatal Thing to engage at first in any bad Design ; for Men are usually so proud and stomachful, that they will stick at nothing, rather than that Design should be defeated, and their Credit lost. They will make good one *Calumny* by another, rather than be accounted *Liars* and *Defamers* ; they will follow an *Accusation* with *Subornation*, rather than fall from their Point, and are more careful of their Honour than their Conscience : They could not at first believe they should hazard so much to bring about their Purposes ; but when they are once in, they will hazard all, rather than not go through.

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But, supposing the Priests and Rulers were truly perswaded, that *Jesus* deserved by their Law to die, and so would take it on themselves, altho' they wanted legal Evidence; yet, how could the Common People be thus sure that he deserv'd to die? And yet they take his Blood upon their Heads, as if they had, every Man of them, known him truly guilty. One may believe the Judge is uncorrupt, the Jury very honest, and the Witnesses true and faithful; and yet a Spectator would be loth to take the Blood of a condemn'd Person upon his Head, for fear some Fraud, or some Mistake, might be committed. What Madness is it to concern our selves in Cases that belong not to us? But why, of all Things in the World, will Men engage their Children and Posterity in Curses, *upon Supposition*? Why will they venture and defy the Vengeance of God upon themselves and Children, upon the Certainty of the Guilt of a Person, whom neither Witnesses could *prove*, nor the Judge would *pronounce* --- *Guilty*? Man is a strange Creature when enrag'd! A strange Creature, when under the Power of any Passion! He thinks of nothing but the present Inclination, whether to love or hate; and he will gratify it, at what Expence or Hazard soever. These People mean not certainly the Mischiefs that they imprecate, but only mean to be believ'd in what they then affirm; but they speak to one who hears; they call on God, who will not be so dealt with, but who will sometimes take them at their Word, and hear and grant those Prayers that will undo them; but evermore with Justice. *He will visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him, and he will shew Mercy to Thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments.* This is a plain Proof, that there is such a Relation betwixt one

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Generation and another, that Good or Evil is derived from one to the other, *i. e.* temporal Prosperity or Misfortune; (for it touches not the Soul, we may be sure) and both these Things are for the Encouragement of Virtue and Religion, and grounded on that strong Affection Parents bear to Children, and to the inextinguishable Desires they have of doing them good, and warding them from Mischief. You love your Children, and your Childrens Children, and even as far as you can see in Wishes; and would do almost any thing to procure their Welfare---- Keep the Commands of God, and live virtuously, and walk holily before him; for, *He shews Mercy to Thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments*: And if you would not bring Evil upon their Heads, nor cause them to be visited in Wrath, see that you live your selves in all Obedience to his Laws--- *for he will visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him.*

We may well presume upon the Justice of God, in these Proceedings, without staying to speak to it now; and therefore it need not seem strange, if God did really punish the Children of these enraged Petitioners for Christ's Death, as they desired, and deserved he should. The fore Calamities That People endured for many Years, both before and after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, might every Day assure them, that God heard the dreadful Imprecation of their Parents and Ancestors--- *His Blood be on us, and on our Children.* And, truly, whoever will consider the Fortune of that poor People, from that unhappy Hour to this, throughout the World, will think that Cry is still, as it were, in God's Ears. They have been miserable beyond Expression; they have been for more than Sixteen Hundred Years without City, without Temple,

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without High Priest, without Sacrifice, without Prince; scatter'd thro' all the Countries of the World, and low, depress'd, and in Subjection everywhere: They own themselves, that they are under God's Displeasure; but they see or acknowledge not the Cause. They are as obstinate, and fierce, and virulent against the *Name* of Christ, as their Forefathers were against his *Person*; so that they vindicate the Justice of God's Inflictions, by continuing on the Cause, and by their outrageous Infidelity, will not let his Anger cease from them: They tread in their Fathers Steps, they are not only as wicked and immoral as they were, but by continued Blasphemies and Impieties, still persecute and crucify the Son of God, and draw his Blood upon their Heads: They are the most inveterate Enemies of Christ and his Religion thro' the World. All People else are Enemies by Interest and by Accident; but the *Jews* by Principle and Choice. The Followers of *Mahomet* speak most respectfully of *Isa*, i. e. *Jesus*, and say, that he shall save his Followers, if they are sincerely faithful, and obedient to his Precepts, (and he who says otherwise, says wrong.) The *Jews* blaspheme and curse his sacred Name on all Occasions, not mentioning the same with Decency or Patience. Should we not reckon this one of the heaviest Curses that can fall upon them? *Is not this Blood* most fearfully *upon them and their Children*? Let us learn at least from hence, not to give way to Rage, nor in our Madness, involve our Children and Posterity in dreadful Curses and Misfortunes. Let every Generation bear its own Burthen; sufficient to the Day will be the Evil thereof; our Sins will entitle them to enough of God's Vengeance, if he be not very merciful: *Remember not Lord our Iniquities, nor the Iniquities of our Forefathers, neither take thou Vengeance of them---* is what we

ask

ask daily of God. We must not therefore ask him by our Imprecations, to remember us in visiting our Children: But this we do, when we devote them to his Wrath, if such and such Things are not true; which yet, perhaps, are false, at least uncertain; or if we are not innocent, when perhaps our Hearts assure us we are guilty, but we will say these Things to serve some present Turn, and save our Credit.

These Uses we may make of this Part of the Relation of our Saviour's Passion. Each Day of the following Week, will furnish us with more and more Considerations of the like Nature; nor can we use the Time and History better, than to consider the Particulars attentively, and make as proper Applications as we can of each of them to our own Condition.

Few People but approve of *Pilate's* Care and Purpose to acquit our Lord, because he thought him innocent; and all condemn his falling from that Purpose, tho' under Force and Fear, and apprehensive of great Dangers. And who is there among us all, that has not made as honest and becoming Resolutions of discharging well his Duty in this and that particular Occurrence; yet has not fainted upon Trial, yielded, if not to Fear, yet to some other Passion that has overborn his Reason, and made him act against his settled Judgment? And yet has faintly tried to wash his Hands in Innocency, by some poor Plea or other, in Excuse of what he did; that hardly satisfies himself, much less impartial Standers-by. As easily as we part with it, we are very much made for Innocence; we would have every body think us in Possession of it; we are perpetually trying to recover it to our selves, by framing Excuses for what is past, that will, we think, diminish from the Guilt; and I believe, whatever be the Purchase, we think we have given up too much for it. Hear the Conclusion.

clusion of this Man. These very *Jews*, to whose outrageous Cries he gave up Christ, within a few Years, complain'd of his Government to *Vitellius*, then the *President* of *Syria*, who put him out, and sent him to *Rome* to answer for his Misdemeanors: But before he reach'd that Place, *Tiberius Caesar* died, and his Successor sent him, by way of Banishment, to *Vienne*, a City of *France*, upon the *Rhosne*; where he liv'd despis'd and miserable for five or six Years, and then dispatch'd himself by his own Hands. I dare not venture to affirm how far the Divine Vengeance was concern'd in pursuing this unhappy Man; but I dare venture to affirm, that had he follow'd but the Dictates of his Reason and Conscience in releasing Christ, whom he thought innocent, the Accusations of the *Jews* of other Faults, had been less burthen some to his Mind; *Caesar's* Displeasure, and his Banishment, would have been born much better. Let but an exil'd Man carry his Innocence and a good Conscience with him, and he will find his Native Country, Wife and Children, Friends and Comforts, wheresoever he shall go, *i. e.* he shall be happy in the Approbation of God above, and of his Heart within, which will be to him every thing he stands in need of. To make an end --- Whatever we think of *Pilate*, we are sure that we our selves at least are innocent of the Blood of this just Person; and are amaz'd to think how dreadful a Curse these People laid themselves under, by calling for the Blood of Christ upon their Heads. But neither are we innocent our selves of the Blood of this just Person; for they were certainly our Sins, the Sins of the World, that did not only want, but occasion the Death of Christ; nor do we less than call for the Blood of Christ upon our Heads, when we are impious and incredulous, and obdurately impenitent. The Scriptures speak of some, and Christians too, that

that crucify'd the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame; that trod him under foot, counted the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and did despite to the Spirit of Grace, Heb. vi. 6. x. 29. when yet that Son of God was seated on his Throne in Heaven, out of the Reach of human Insolence and Injury. In a word, that Blood will be *upon our Heads*, whether we call for it or no, if (as the Scripture speaks) *our Hearts are not* beforehand *sprinkled with it, from an Evil Conscience*, i. e. without a Figure: That precious Blood of Christ which was shed upon the Cross, to merit and obtain Redemption and Forgiveness of our Sins, upon Discharge of the Conditions call'd for at our Hands, namely, our Faith, Repentance, and Amendment; will be so far from doing it, without Discharge of those Conditions, that it will raise our Guilt and Condemnation to the highest Pitch, and make it much more tolerable for *Pilate*, and these Priests and Governors, and poor unhappy People, in the Day of Judgment, than for us.



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S E R M O N XII.

Preach'd before the

R I G H T H O N O U R A B L E

T H E

L O R D S

Spiritual and Temporal,

O N

J A N U A R Y the 30th, 17¹⁰.

A T

WESTMINSTER-ABBY.

2 Kings, Chap. VIII. Ver. 13.

*And Hazael said, But what is thy Servant a
Dog, that he should do this great Thing?
And Elisha answered, The Lord hath shewed
me, that thou shalt be King of Syria.*

THE King of Syria being Sick, and hearing that
a Prophet of the Lord was at *Damascus*, sent
his Servant *Hazael* with a very liberal Present to him,
to

to enquire of God, by him, whether he should recover of his Disease. To this great Messenger, the Prophet answers---- *Go say unto him--- Thou may'st certainly recover ; howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die.* Would the Prophet here have *Hazael* tell a Lie, and say his Lord should live, when he was certain he would die, being told so by the Prophet ? Or does he rather say, You will hardly be so ill a Courtier, as to tell the King, that he shall die ; you will leave so unwelcome a Message to any other, and rather chuse to say, *Thou may'st certainly recover*, altho' I know very well he never shall recover, and tell you so, from God. This Sense is natural and easy enough ; but the Words do not say it expressly enough. Or, does he bid him speak what is certainly true, if supplied with somewhat that *Elisha* knew very well ? Go and say to your Prince, *Thou may'st certainly recover, i. e.* from this Disease, which in itself may not be mortal, *Howbeit, the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die, i. e.* by another Hand, after another manner ; the former Part *Hazael* was to say to *Benhadad*, the latter *Elisha* said to *Hazael*, and each of them was true ; for *Benhadad* might have recovered, had not *Hazael* murdered him. If therefore we respect the *Distemper* only, it was true that the Prophet bid him say --- *Thou may'st certainly recover ;* but if we respect the *Event*, which God saw ; and discovered to the Prophet, it was also true, that *the King should certainly die.* What the Prophet said, was certainly true in this Sense, and we ought to take the Words in any other Sense, than such a one as would make a holy Prophet the Author of a Falshood. When he had spoken these Words, the Prophet settled his Countenance so stedfastly, look'd so long and so intently upon *Hazael*, that he was perfectly confounded ; and the Prophet himself burst into Tears.

Hazael

Hazael ask'd him, What it was that occasion'd such a strange Emotion, and why he wept? The Prophet told him, it was to see, and consider, what mighty Mischiefs he, in time, would bring upon *Israel*, how he would fire their strong Holds, slay their young Men with the Sword, dash in pieces their poor Infants, and rip up their Women with Child. To whom *Hazael* replies, in the Words of the Text --- *But what is thy Servant? A Dog; that he should do this great Thing?* How is it possible that I, so mean and inconsiderable a Person, should ever attain to the Power of doing so great Matters, as you mention? But had I now the Power, how were it possible I should commit such barbarous and such brutish Outrages? Account me not, I pray thee, a Dog, and so inhuman. And *Elisha* answered--- *The Lord hath shewed me, that thou shalt be King of Syria.* Thou wilt, by that Means, have the Power of doing all this Evil, and thou wilt change thy Mind with thy Condition; and then *thy Will*, will be *the King of Syria's Will*, which is to increase their Power, and to oppress their Neighbours to the utmost; the inveterate Enmity that has long reign'd betwixt the *Syrians* and the *Jews*, will be reviv'd, and carry'd by thee to Extremity.

This is the Meaning of the Text, as in Conjunction with the History. The Uses of which, that I intend to make at present, will be these---

First, To observe how little we know our own selves.

Secondly, To consider whether this Prediction of the Prophet, that *Hazael* should be King, will in any sort excuse the Means he us'd to make himself so. And,

Lastly, To make what Application may be proper.

First, It is very obvious to observe from hence how little we know our own selves. There is no Reason to think that *Hazael* was not in good earnest when he would not have the Prophet (nor could himself) believe he should, in time, commit such Cruelties as were foretold. But Man is a reasonable Creature, and as God has made him *capable* of doing it, so he has *obliged* him to consider the Consequences of his Actions, and how naturally one thing follows from another. He who breaks down the Bank of a great Water, occasions the Overflow, it may be, of a great deal of Ground, the Fall of a House, the Death of a Child, and the Drowning of many Cattle. *Who would have thought it?* Is a Fool's Excuse, when things follow naturally, closely, or easily: And *I intended no such Mischief*, is as idle, where Mischief was likely to follow, tho' you should intend never so well. Men must intend well, and do well, if they would be safe, where Intentions have no immediate Influence on the Action of the Agent.

Now if a Man who actually intends well, shall yet be answerable for the Mischief that is done, by an unreasonable and foolish Choice of Means improper and unfit, we may conclude, he shall be accountable for the Evil he does, *without* any good Intention: If therefore I intend to do no Mischief, I must not put my self in the way of doing any; I must avoid the Occasion and Temptation of entring into Evil, if I would be innocent. A Man knows his own Mind and Purpose at present; and sees how he stands determin'd by his present Circumstances: he is now innocent, and likes the being so; and finding it so full of Ease and Satisfaction, he resolves to continue: Let him then take heed of falling into any such Courses, as will insensibly draw him off

from these good Purposes, and puts him, by degrees, on Practices he now abhors. He is now possess'd with a religious Fear of God, and sanctifies his Name, and reverences his Word, and will prophane neither; and should you tell him, he will be a common Swearer, an impious, execrable Man, and great Blasphemer, he would think it strange, if not impossible; his Heart abhors such Thoughts, he trembles at the Mention of such wicked things, and would account himself *a Dog*, if he should do them. But in a little time, he falls into such Company, as make no Difficulty of these Matters, and accustom him to bear them patiently, at least in others; and he himself ventures a little, and then draws back with some Confusion; remembers the good Principles that his religious Parents at first instill'd into him, and which his good Instructors after cultivated carefully; and these Rebukes keep him some time in tolerable Order; he will not resolve to leave the Company, but will not be infected by it, nor be led by their Example: But these Resolves last not long in full Force, but yield, by little and little, to Custom and Example; he takes in time the Manners of his Company, and becomes the Man, whose Image frighten'd him not long ago. So People stare at new Fashions, and are, at first, amaz'd to see things so fantastical and odd; but, by degrees, they fall into them, and become in a little time *Standards* themselves. There is no trusting to one's present Mind and Resolution, tho' never so reasonable and good, unless we will take all Care to avoid the Occasions and Temptations that will naturally change them. 'Tis no great matter, to resolve never to fall into the *greatest* Sins that Men can possibly commit; the very Apprehension of those huge Enormities, is hard and painful to the Mind; but, however, a Man is not secure, who puts himself into the Way

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that leads thither, tho' it be at great Distance. The present Designs of Men have, it may be, no Eye or Tendency to such and such a Consequence ; but, however, Men must look to it ; for when we are once out of the right Way, every Step we take, leads us but into farther Wandrings, and we know not whither we are going. If one had ask'd of *David*, Whether he, when he first gaz'd on *Bathsheba*, in her Retirements, intended to murder the bravest Man he had in his Kingdom, in the most vile and treacherous Manner, with all the Circumstances of Baseness, Folly, and huge Wickedness, that can attend an Action? Doubtless, he would have thought it utterly impossible, that such a Villany should have ever found any Place in his great Heart. But yet we see, that that adulterous Look ended in that strange Murder, and left a lasting Blemish upon his Life and Honour. In vain do People think of going just to such a Pitch of Wickedness, and no farther ; either their Hopes of gaining some farther Security, or their Fears of falling into greater Danger, engage them in new Designs, whose Consequences they attend not to : And when a Man is gone but half way, he looks back, and wonders often how he got so far ; but new Necessities arise, and carry him on he knows not whither ; he commits a new Offence to justify a former, and this will require another to secure itself. A Man no more knows where to stop in Sin and Error, than he can ascertain his Charge in either *Law* or *Building* ; he is train'd on by new Emergencies, beyond what he at first propos'd or design'd, and all is lost, he thinks, if he goes not thro' with it ; and at last, he finds himself almost undone, who at first intended a little Pleasure or Convenience only, or to do himself some Justice, or his Adversary a small Ill Turn. We find how we are carry'd unaccountably from Things good and innocent,

innocent, to Things indifferent, and from thence to Things suspicious, and that want Justification; and from thence to such as will not bear it; and much more certain are these wicked Consequences, when we begin with Things unlawful; the wisest Man alive cannot tell where he is to end. *The Heart is deceitful above all Things, who can know it?* We have therefore no Security against our falling into the very Depths of Hell, but our great Care and Watchfulness to keep within the Bounds of Innocence at first, and to consider well the Consequence of every Action and Undertaking, and to trust but little to our present Mind and Resolutions, which every little Accident *can* and *will* alter. One may safely say, no wicked Man did ever intend to arrive to the Pitch he is now at of Wickedness; but gradually, and by Progression, one Sin drew on another; and he has lost his first Views; the Purposes of his Heart were daily chang'd by new and fatal Opportunities, that, from one Commission to another, drew him to the miserable Point he is now at. A Man can hardly think he is capable of doing what, in a little time, he will glory in having done; and justify to Death, what he once would have chosen to die, rather than do. So little do most People know what they are made of; or rather, what their Passions may in time make them, without the greatest Care, Jealousy, and Watchfulness over their own Hearts possible; so little do they observe (till it be too late) how they are train'd from one thing to another, till they are lost, out of their Depth, and past returning.

It cannot enter into *Hazael's* Heart, that he should ever have the *Power* of doing all these mighty Mischiefs, that the Prophet read in his bad Lines and Features with a Flood of Tears; or, that, supposing he were able, he should ever *incline* to

commit such cruel and unheard-of Outrages : Rise up the teeming Women, and dash against the Stone the innocent and unprovoking Children; forgetful of his Mother, and the Pledges of his Love at home. How can such inhuman Thoughts be harbour'd in the Heart of Flesh, which is the Seat of Pity? The Prophet told him, That he saw he would be King, and home he goes and kills his Master, reigns in his stead, and is provided of the *Power*, to do the great foretold Mischiefs. Had the Prophet told him That his Sorrows broke out at his Eyes in the violent manner he saw and was confounded at, to think how treacherously he would murder his Prince, that trusted him with the Care and Conservation of his Health and Life, 'tis probable he would have bid him look for better Things from him, and not account him such a faithless Villain; and yet there were no many Days betwixt his doubting how he could attain the Power of doing so much Mischief, and his attaining it, by murdering of his King. When mounted on his Master's Throne by these bad Means what shall he do to turn the Peoples Minds from considering how he came to sit there, but divert them by a War abroad, revive the ancient Enmity betwixt the *Syrians* and the *Jews*, renew their ancient Claims, and shew the greatest Zeal to recover the Honour they had lately lost by *Benhadad*? And to this purpose, he must breathe nothing but Slaughter, the total Ruin of the *Jews*, the firing their Strong-holds, dashing their Infants on the Ground, ripping their Women up with Child, and putting all their young Men to the Sword, to extirpate utterly the Race of *Israel*, and rid the *Syrians* of their old inveterate Enemies. And thus his *Power* inspires him with the *Will* of doing what he could not bear to think on, when the Prophet told him what would come to pass; and this hard *Will* is

necessary now, he fancies, to maintain his *Power*. His Ambition at first dipp'd his Hands in his Master's Blood; and then to wash out that foul Stain, he must do something popular; he must be cruelly jealous against his Countries Enemies, to divert his People from enquiring after their Prince's Death; and make Atonement for his Treachery, by barbarous War, and by prodigious Slaughters. Thus does one Depth of Sin call for another, and he who trusts his Heart with one unlawful passion, will find it will make way for many other Guests; such as he never thought of entertaining.

Let his Example therefore instruct us to look to our selves, whilst we are innocent; never so to trust the Resolutions of our Mind, tho' reasonable and calm, as to neglect the natural and the necessary Means of preserving our selves in that good Temper; never to think our Opinions will not alter with our Circumstances; believing our selves Temptation-proof, only because we know we should be so, and intend to be so; but carefully avoiding all such Opportunities as may betray us into those Commissions, which we now abhor; and never to believe it is within our Power to stop at this Offence, or this Degree of Sin, and go no farther. If we will make this Use of *Hazael's* Example, we may go on to consider, in the *Second Place*, Whether this Prediction of the Prophet, that *Hazael* should be King, and should commit these Cruelties, will in any sort excuse the Means he took to become King, or the Cruelties he committed when he was so.

There is Reason enough to think, that his having been anointed by *Elijah*, (or designed for King by God's Appointment, with that Ceremony) and his
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being now told by *Elisha* that he would, one Day be the King of *Syria*; there is Reason enough to think, that this preparatory Unction, and this Prediction, did indeed occasion *Hazael* to dispatch his Master. Ambitious Minds, void of the Fear of God, are forward enough of themselves to undertake the greatest Wickedness, to attain their Ends; but when they have the Countenance of *Inspiration* on their Sides, then nothing can discourage or restrain them; they look upon themselves as call'd by God, to execute his Purpose and Decree; and Negligence is Disobedience, and Delay is Sinful; they do not think they are to wait for God's Time or expect that He should bring his Purposes to pass by Means and Methods of his own; but will precipitate Events, and fancy every thing is lawful that conduces to the End declared by God. *Jehu* was thus anointed by a Prophet, and told by him, what he should do to all the House of *Ahab*; but this was all, not by the way of *foretelling* what *Jehu* would incline to do, and do, when he was King; but by the way of *Command*, to inform him what God exacted of him, and expected from him. *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee King over the People of the Lord, even over Israel; and thou shalt smite the House of Ahab thy Master, that I may avenge the Blood of my Servants the Prophets, and the Blood of all the Servants of the Lord, at the Hand of Jezebel.* There is no reading this without the seeing a Commission from God, to put his Orders in Execution; and he accordingly destroyed the House of *Ahab*, and became King in his stead. And tho' he was not himself a good Man, yet he was God's Instrument, to avenge the Blood of his Prophets; and since he receiv'd so positive and express Orders to do what he did, I do not see, but he was for

far blameless, as he perform'd the Will of God, without going beyond his Commission; if he exceeded *that*, and indulged any thing to his Ambition, cruel Inclinations, or particular Revenge, he will want to be justify'd, tho' what he did might also tend to the bringing about the Purpose of God, in rooting up the House of *Ahab*. As Men may certainly be guilty of cruel and revengeful Purposes, known to their own Hearts, tho' they are prosecuting a just Cause, by just and legal Methods. But this, I imagine, was not *Hazael's* Case; the Prophet had anointed him for King, or he was told by him, that he should certainly be King of *Syria*; the Meaning of which, was one of these two Things; either that God had positively designed he should be King; or foresaw what Courses he would take to make himself so, and foretold the *Event*, that so it would be, without declaring the *Means*. If the Prophet anointed him King, and designed he should be so; yet he did not bid him take the Courses he took to become King. He anointed him beforehand; but he was to expect God's Time, and to wait till it could innocently come to pass. But if God only shewed the Prophet, that *Hazael* would be King of *Syria*, (which the Prophet also told to *Hazael*) then can we only conclude safely, that God well knew, and foresaw that *Hazael* would take the Courses to become King, which he after took, without directing, or approving them. And as God's Prescience did not by any means necessitate or constrain him to such Murther of his Master, so neither will the Prediction of the Prophet justify his coming to the Crown by any such Means; any more than Christ's foretelling *Peter's* Denial, and *Judas's* Treachery, either compell'd them to it, or will excuse them for it. God (who sees whatever Motives can occur to our Minds, and sees how they

will influence and move) gives us our Liberty to chuse; and knows which way we shall incline, and what our Choice will be, and can communicate the Event without constraining, or having constrain'd our Wills to make such Choice; and having this Foreknowledge, can determine these Events to serve such and such Purposes, as he sees fit; and yet the Blame shall lye upon the Instruments, if they either propose a wicked *End*, or pitch on wicked *Means* to compass a good End by. We know that God intended to punish the Revolts and Apostacies of his People, and that by the Hand of *Hazael*, who, when King of *Syria*, would commit unheard-of Cruelties, and execute the severest Vengeance on the *Jews*. How easily may this be turn'd? That God foreseeing what Courses *Hazael* would take to become King, and when so, would turn his Arms on *Judah* with the greatest Violence; whose Sins and Provocations were so high, that he would suffer them to fall into his Hands, and let them see and know he us'd him as an Instrument to punish their Offences. This he might justly do, yet *Hazael* be exceeding faulty, as well in the Courses he took to become King, as in the Cruelties he would exercise against the *Jews*, when he was so. 'Tis worth our while to observe what God says, *Isa. x. 5. O Assyrian, the Rod of mine Anger, and the Staff in their Hand is mine Indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical Nation, and against the People of my Wrath will I give him a Charge to take the Spoil, and take the Prey, and to tread them down like the Mire of the Streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his Heart think so, but it is in his Heart to destroy, and to cut off Nations, not a few. And in Ver. 12. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole Work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, I will punish the Fruit of the*

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flout Heart of the King of Assyria, and the Glory of his high Looks. From whence we may conclude, That God sometimes makes use of Instruments to bring his purpose to effect, who yet know nothing of it, but are guided by Motives of their own, and shall be punish'd for so doing: They shall account to God for the Means they chose to attain their End, tho' both the Means and End were effectual to bring about his Will. The Prescience then of God, and the Prediction of the Prophet, will not excuse *Hazael* for murdering his Master, to become King, nor the Cruelties he committed, when so, altho' those Cruelties were the Executions of God's just Anger. Let us call to Mind the Example of a much better Man than either *Hazael*, or *Jehu*, and that is *David*. This Man had also been anointed King by *Samuel*, the standing Prophet of his Time; and that before a great Company, and *Saul* was known to be rejected of the Lord; and yet he would not put his Hand to forward his Advancement to any thing unlawful; tho' he had all the Advantages and favourable Opportunities that any Man could wish for, to put him in Possession of God's Promises: *Saul* was his declar'd Enemy, and sought his Life on all Occasions, by ways unworthy of him, and such as would, if any could, have justify'd Revenge; and God had twice delivered *Saul* into his Hands; but *David* still neglected all his Opportunities, and would not become a King by any Means that were not strictly justifiable. He left it to God, to fulfil his own Promises, by his own Methods, and at his own appointed Time. If God design'd him for a Crown, (as by his Unction, certainly he did) let him so place it on his Head, as it shall sit secure and easy. He will be instrumental to fulfil the Will of God, in making him a King, no otherwise, than by doing what was fit to do, had there been no such Promise,

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Promise. *The Lord shall smite him, or his Day shall come to die, or he shall descend into Battel and perish--- But God forbid that I should smite the Lord's Anointed.* See how a Man of God fulfils a Prophecy! The Words and Anointing of *Samuel* were as certain, positive, and determinate to *David*, as the Unction of *Elijah*, and the Prediction of *Elisha*, were to *Hazael*, that he should be King. But the different Heart makes different Application: The Grace and Fear of God, and Sense of Duty and of Honour, suggests to *David*, he must stay for God's appointed Season, who best knows how, and when to accomplish his own Promises; whereas the *other* takes the Word just from the Prophet's Mouth, and gives it to his own ambitious Heart to read and explain; that Heart replies immediately, --- The God that gave this Oracle, had given him now the Opportunity of making it good. He shall be King of *Syria* ---- How can that be, whilst his Master lives? When is his Master nearer Death, than when exceeding sick? And how much less of Life could he ever lose than now? He must not now be wanting to himself. Go tell your Master, the Prophet says, from God, that *He shall live*; but then remember that he says, *You shall be King*, i. e. He is to live as long as you please. Is not this to fulfil the Will of God, since 'tis impossible you should be King, whilst your Master lives? Let any Passion that we have, pretend to explain God's Promises, and it shall certainly give them its own Turn; it will fulfil the Will of God, according to its own. A Promise therefore of something to come, without a positive Command of God to execute it in such a certain manner as is express'd, will never justify a Man, fulfilling it by any other Methods than what are strictly lawful, and justifiable of themselves. Which brings me again to this Conclusion,

clusion, That the Prediction of *Elisha*, that *Hazael* should be King of *Syria*, will not justify the wicked Courses he took to become King; nor the being foretold what Cruelties he should afterwards commit when King, justify those Cruelties.

Let us see, *in the Last Place*, What Use may be made, by the way of Application, of what hath been said on these Heads. *This Day* reminds us of the huge and numberless Calamities the People of this Kingdom underwent from a long, unnatural War amongst our selves; and it reminds us of an everlasting Stain laid on the Honour of the *English* Nation, by adjudging their *King* to *Death*, against all *Reason*, all *Law*, and all *Example* of our Ancestors. Nor did our Miseries end here; that execrable Day concluded only the Misfortunes of that Prince; neither his Friends nor Enemies ceas'd to suffer with him. Such an atrocious, impious Fact, must (as it did) call for a world of Lives, and Liberties, and Confiscations of Estate, and other cruel and vexatious Oppressions of our Countrymen; and laid the Foundation of such an Enmity, as is, I fear, to last for ever. Had any one foretold what Miseries these unhappy People would bring upon their Nation, I make no doubt, they would have soon return'd, with *Hazael*, *But what is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do these great Things?* Yet many now alive remember well they did them. I see no Reason to believe, that any single Man, or Party whatever, could intend, at first, the Evils they afterwards effected; but I do not see that this is so much an Excuse for *Them*, as a great Matter of Caution to *Others*, how they at first embroil Publick Affairs, and enter on the weighty Matters of reforming Church or State, tho' with a good Design enough; but yet by Methods illegal and untry'd.

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'Tis only God can say to the Waves, *Hitherto shall ye go, and no farther*; and so it is with *the Madness of the People*; a little Matter will inflame a Multitude, when a Hundred Men that can render a Reason, shall not be able to dismiss it peaceably: Small are the Beginnings of the greatest Mischiefs. But Men are at their Liberty to act, and shall answer for their Actions; and they are capable of seeing, and considering Consequences, and therefore are accountable for the Neglect of doing so, when Mischiefs follow probably, and easily, and commonly. The good Intentions of the *Heart* will secure the *Heart*; but I am not able to say, with Certainty enough, how far they will authorize the Executions of the *Hand*; even those that follow immediately, and are in Nature and Reason fitted to obtain the End of those Intentions: But in this I will be confident, that the first good Intentions will not reach all subsequent Acts that are not good. Let some, of all Conditions, be presum'd to enter on our Wars with good Intentions, and others with no bad ones; (and I think he must be much a Stranger to our Story, that will not allow of this) tho' we may see, perhaps, that the Virtue and Innocence of these Peoples Intentions may go far to justify those Actions that were immediately influenc'd and govern'd by those Intentions; (altho' those People should have been mistaken;) yet who can see, that those *prime* Intentions are to justify all the Actions that follow'd, with all their several Consequences? I hope, with my whole Heart, that all who had occasion to reconsider the Share they had in bringing so many dreadful Mischiefs on their Country, when they thought of repenting, sought not for Justification from their first honourable and good Intentions, but had Recourse to the sure Sanctuary, the Mercies of God in Jesus Christ. I own it, I would rather co-

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ver, if I could, than exaggerate the Offences of our Fathers, with respect to the Wars that occasion'd so much Misery to this Nation, and laid the Foundation of that fatal Tragedy, that makes *this Day* so hard to be forgotten, and so hard to be remember'd. But I would not that any one should think he came off innocent, because he enter'd on at first with laudable Designs and good Intentions; without considering how many intervening Acts were cruel and outrageous; and how he was train'd on by flow, insensible Degrees, to be instrumental in abundance of barbarous and brutal Facts; to embrue his Hands, at last, in innocent and sacred Blood, and to the enslaving of his Country. Whoso should then have said----- " You are now angry with some needless Ceremonies, which yet are fewer, and more decent, than ever were in use in any Christian Church, protected by the *State*, for 1300 Years, and without which no Christian Church did ever yet serve God in Publick, that we know of: Angry to have a *Form of Publick Prayer* prescrib'd, proper and suited to the Wants of all Christians, tho' you may use what Liberty you will in your retir'd and *Family-Devotions* betwixt God and you: And to get rid of these so easy Impositions, you will pull down all the Fences that secure the Christian *Faith* and *Discipline*, and let in Wolves and Foxes, that will prey upon the Christian Flock, and bring in Heresies, and all licentious Errors, and drive away the Shepherds that should feed them and secure them; extirpate an *Order* that is as old as Christianity within this Kingdom, and put a Thousand and a Thousand Families to seek their Bread in desolate Places. You are now jealous and tenacious of your *Liberties*; but, by the Courses you are taking to secure them and enlarge them, you, in time, will come

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“ to take them away from every one besides, and
 “ lose them your selves at last : You will raise *Ar-*
 “ *mies*, and become their Subjects ; make to your
 “ selves Captains of Thousands and Ten Thousands,
 “ and submit your Necks to their imperious Or-
 “ ders ; involve your Country in Desolation, and
 “ much Blood ; trample down ancient *Honour* and
 “ *Nobility* ; disperse your *Princes* into Foreign Coun-
 “ tries, where they shall take up Manners that you
 “ hate, Maxims destructive of your Liberty, and a
 “ Religion you abhor : Vanquish your *King* ; de-
 “ prive him of his Friends and Servants ; distress
 “ him to Distraction ; force him to fly into the very
 “ Arms of Mischief, from whence you will redeem
 “ him, like a Slave, to cast him into Fetters of your
 “ own ; despoil him of his Regal Honours ; straitly
 “ imprison him ; and put him to the Sword at last,
 “ (Horror to think upon!) with all the Circum-
 “ stances of Scorn and Ignominy possible. These
 “ are the Things that you will do to secure your
 “ *Christian* and *Civil* Liberties.” Whoso should
 thus have Prophesied, should certainly have had my
 Text return'd upon him---- *What is thy Servant a*
Dog, that he should do these great things? Yet these
 great Things were done; and in a manner worse
 than I express them. These great Things are past
 and gone; and I have no worse purpose in remem-
 bring them, than to advise, that all who had no
 Hand therein, should be as careful to avoid all man-
 ner of Occasions of Evil, as they, we think, ought
 to have been, who were the most concern'd in them.
 I apprehend no Cause of *Fear*, and therefore know
 not how to give any *Caution* of falling into those
 enormous Crimes, that make *this Day* the blackest in
 our *Kalendar*, excepting *One*, with which I never
 dare compare it : But there is need of all imaginable
 Caution, that People do not readily engage in Mat-

ters of Importance, especially relating to the Publick, trusting to good Intentions only, and to the Mind they are at present in, without considering what may follow. Mens Heats are Heats of *Zeal* at first, benign and gentle ; but little Accidents may raise them to a hot consuming Fire, that may, in time, destroy their Neighbours and themselves. It was the turbulent and restless Humour of private People, and the Conceit of their Abilities, thrusting themselves into publick Matters, and stirring up their Neighbours to complain, and shew themselves uneasy, that contributed a great deal to the Misfortune of those Days that brought this *Anniversary* amongst us, so grievous both to Friends and Enemies. And can we do a better Thing upon it, than advise all Men *to study to be quiet*, and do their own Business; to keep within their proper Compass; reform themselves, and all that are within their Care; but leave the publick Matters to the Hands to which they are entrusted ; give no Disturbance to their Management, nor distract them from attending to the great Affairs, on which depends our very Civil Life and Being, by little private Differences, and poor Debates, that may be very safely laid aside for ever ; or, at the least, suspended for a while, and easily resum'd again, (if there be need) when the great Struggle of the World is over, and the Fortune of us and our Posterity decided.

The Application of the *latter* Part of the *Text*, to the Business of this Day, would carry me farther than I have either Time or Will to go. Those wicked Men had no Prophet sent to Them from God, to tell them what *great Things* would befall them; but yet there were not wanting Men that undertook to lead them, *by the Word of God*, to all the mischievous Designs imaginable. They were not tempted to engage in these Affairs, by any such Prediction

dition as *Elisha* uttered to *Hazael*; but they found Men, in *Prophets Cloathing*, that both excited them, and promised them Success, *in the Name of the Lord*. The Word of God, I own, was never worser used, by furious, ignorant, misguided (but still I hope, not prophane) Spirits. The Word of God can never contradict his *Will*, which is, that Peace and Righteousness, Truth and Goodness, should for ever flourish on the Earth, and that Men should live in Quiet, Order, and good Government, and enjoy the happy Fruits of that good Stock. And whenever you find the Scriptures leading Men into any Evil, or doing any Mischief to Mankind, especially to Government, you may be sure, they are misapplied, perverted and abused.

I fear I have already been too long; but yet must ask the Patience of two or three Minutes more, to say Two Things; which, if the *Text* should not, the *Day* will certainly bear me out in. The first is this---- This Day is, thro' the excessive Partiality of some of both Sides, become a Day of great Trial to the Preachers; Talk of the *Duty*, *Honour*, and *Obedience* of the *Subject* to the *Prince*, and you are thought, by some, to preach away the Peoples Liberties, and make them Slaves; Talk of the *Peoples Liberties*, and you are opening presently a Door to Mutiny, Disloyalty, and flat Rebellion, with some others. They are both of them, God be thanked, in the wrong; and the Truth is (like our happy *Constitution*) betwixt them. The *Crown* has many and excellent *Prerogatives*, and will, I hope in God, never have less or fewer. The *People* have great *Liberties*, and will, I hope, deserve them, and enjoy them, whilst they are a People. Who are these *People* but our selves? All but the *Prince* are comprehended in that Word. The Priests must preach up, *Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Fear to*
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whom Fear, and Honour to whom Honour. And must affirm all that St. Peter and St. Paul have said, of Peoples being subject to the Powers that are set over them, for Good. They cannot else discharge their Duty; nor the People else enjoy the Benefits of a good Government. But may it not be lawful also for the Priests to tell the People, in proper Season, of their Liberties; and shew them wherein they are so happy, above all the People of the Earth besides? That they may understand, know how to value, be careful to preserve, and to continue to Posterity, and thank God for, these singular inestimable Blessings. May not these Things be said, without incurring the odious Brand of *stirring up Sedition and Rebellion*? I know not where these Things will end; but 'tis plain, they make it harder, than it need to be, for honest and sincere Men to do their Duty on these Occasions.

The other Thing that I would say, is this--- That the Observation of *this Day* is become (like the Fifth of *November* to the *Papists*) exceeding grievous and distastful to all *Dissenters*; as well for the License that (they say) is taken upon it, of inveighing against them; as for the Praises that are so liberally bestowed upon King *Charles*, which look, to some of them, as so many Exprobrations and Reproaches. As for the License that is taken upon this Day, of inveighing against *Dissenters*, let them who do it, justify themselves; I am no Advocate for any of them: It was not, certainly, appointed to become a Day of *Wrath* and *Provocation* of our Fellow-Subjects; and, I dare say, those Liberties have done no Service; nor are they fitted to do any; but, considering human Nature, they must needs have done some Mischief, by Irritation, and the hardning of Mens Hearts. And tho' we do not see such Courses have been taken, by those who

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were most concern'd and touch'd, as wise and good Men might have taken, to silence these Reproaches, and to cause these Provocations, in great part, to cease; yet still these furious, bitter Spirits will not be excusable. I verily believe, (and so do all of you) that more Men have been *shamed* by gentle Usage, than revil'd into Repentance by those they thought their Enemies.

As for the *Praises* that are bestow'd upon King *Charles*, I know not who should envy them; nor how a *Church of England Minister* can honestly decline them: He must know nothing of that Prince's History; He must have little Sense of Justice, Gratitude, or Honour, by whom his Memory is not held most precious. 'Twere a small Thing to say, no *Prince* (altho' his *Father* was a very Learned one) but I will say, no *Private Gentleman*, did ever understand the Constitution of our Church better, defend it with stronger Arguments, adhere to it with more Judgment, adorn it with better Manners, live up to its good Principles with more Virtue; nor, in Performance of its Offices, shew more devout and exemplary good Behaviour (I will not, in these Things, except the *Queen* upon the *Throne*, nor that Blessed *Saint* in *Heaven*, her Sister) than did King *Charles the First*. No Prince did ever shew more personal Favour to its Ministers, nor give more Countenance and Credit to its Discipline and Orders. And must I say, no Prince, but *He*, did ever *die* in its Defence, to justify the high Esteem we have Him in? I may; because it is so true, that they who envy him the Glory of that Title, upon all Accounts besides, will yet allow he fell a *Martyr* for the *Church of England*. Would not that Church be most deservedly the Hatred and Reproach of all the World, that should be sparing of her Praises, and best Incense (but let it ever be

unhallow'd Incense) to his Memory? Let them (to make an end) take heed, lest some degree of *Guilt* be thought to make those People *over tender*, who are soon offended with the Praises of King *Charles the First*. And let even *Us our selves* take heed, that such our Praises may appear so well design'd, and be manag'd with that good Temper, Sobriety, and modest Truth, that they provoke those Men to nothing but Compunction, and Relentings, and Repentance, where these Things are wanting; and both our selves and them, to the Imitation of all those excellent good Qualities, those Civil Virtues, and those Religious, Christian Graces, that made him appear so highly exemplary both in Life and Death.





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III

IV





FOUR
SERMONS:

I. On the Death of Queen MARY,
1694.

II. On the Death of the Duke of
GLOUCESTER, 1700.

III. On the Death of King WIL-
LIAM, 1701.

IV. On the QUEEN'S Accession to the
Throne, in 1703.





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P R E F A C E.

THE publishing a few Sermons, whilst I live, the latest of which was preach'd above Eight Years since, and the first above Seventeen, will make it very natural for People to enquire into the Occasion of doing so : And to such I do very willingly assign these following Reasons.

First, From the Observations I have been able to make for these many Years last past, upon our publick Affairs ; and from the natural Tendency of several Principles and Practices that have, of late, been studiously revived, and from what has followed thereupon, I could not help both fearing and presaging, that these Nations would, some Time or other, if ever we should have an enterprizing Prince upon the Throne, of more Ambition than Virtue, Justice, and true Honour, fall into the Way of all other Nations, and lose their Liberty.

Nor could I help foreseeing to whose Charge a great deal of this dreadful Mischief, whenever it should happen, would be laid ; whether justly or unjustly, was not my Business to determine ; but I resolved, for my own particular Part, to

deliver my self, as well as I could, from the Reproaches and the Curses of Posterity, by publickly declaring to all the World, that altho' in the constant Course of my Ministry, I have never failed, on proper Occasions, to recommend, urge, and insist upon, the loving, honouring, and the reverencing the Prince's Person, and holding it, according to the Laws, inviolable and sacred, and paying all Obedience and Submission to the Laws, tho' never so hard and inconvenient to private People; yet did I never think my self at Liberty, or authoriz'd to tell the People, that either Christ, St. Peter, or St. Paul, or any other holy Writer, had, by any Doctrine deliver'd by them, subverted the Laws and Constitutions of the Country in which they lived; or put them in a worse Condition, with Respect to their Civil Liberties, than they would have been, had they not been Christians. I ever thought it a most impious Blasphemy against that Holy Religion, to father any thing upon it, that might encourage Tyranny, Oppression, or Injustice, in a Prince; or that easily tended to make a free, and happy People, Slaves, and miserable. No; People may make themselves as wretched as they will; but let not God be called into that wicked Party. When Force, and Violence, and hard Necessity, have brought the Yoke of Servitude upon a Peoples Neck, Religion will supply them with a patient and submissive Spirit under it, till they can innocently shake it off: But certainly Religion never puts it on. This always was,

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and this at present is my Judgment of these Matters; and I would be transmitted to Posterity (for the little Share of Time such Names as mine can live) under the Character of one who lov'd his Country, and would be thought a good Englishman, as well as a good Clergyman.

This Character I thought would be transmitted by the following Sermons, which were made for, and preached in a private Audience, when I could think of nothing else but doing my Duty on the Occasions that were then offer'd by God's Providence, without any manner of Design of making them publick; and for that Reason, I give them now, as they were then delivered. By which I hope to satisfy those People who have objected a Change of Principles to me, as if I were not now the same Man I formerly was. I never had but one Opinion of these Matters; and that I think is so reasonable and well grounded, that I believe I never can have any other.

Another Reason of my publishing these Sermons at this Time is, that I have a Mind to do my self some Honour, by doing what Honour I could to the Memory of Two most excellent Princes, and who have very highly deserved at the Hands of all the People of these Dominions, who have any true Value for the Protestant Religion, and the Constitution of the English Government, of which they were the great Deliverers, and Defenders. I have lived to see their illustrious Names very rudely handled,

and the great Benefits they did this Nation, treated slightly, and contemptuously. I have lived to see our Deliverance from Arbitrary Power, and Popery, traduc'd and vilify'd by some who formerly thought it was their greatest Merit, and made it Part of their Boast and Glory, to have had a little Hand and Share in bringing it about ; and others, who without it, must have lived in Exile, Poverty, and Misery, meanly disclaiming it, and using ill the Glorious Instrument thereof. Who could expect such a Requital of such Merit ? I have, I own it, an Ambition of exempting my self from the Number of unthankful People : And as I loved and honoured those Great Princes living, and lamented over them when dead, so I would gladly raise them up a Monument of Praise, as lasting as any Thing of mine can be ; and I chuse to do it at this Time, when it is so unfashionable a Thing to speak honourably of them.

The Sermon that was preach'd upon the Duke of Gloucester's Death, was printed quickly after, and is now, because the Subject was so suitable, join'd to the others. The Loss of that most promising and hopeful Prince was, at that Time, I saw, unspeakably great ; and many Accidents since have convinced us, that it could not have been over-valued. That precious Life, had it pleased God to have prolonged it to the usual Space, had saved us many Fears, and Jealou-

Jealousies, and dark Distrusts, and prevented many Alarms, that have long kept us, and will keep us still waking and uneasy. Nothing remained to comfort and support us under this heavy Stroke, but the Necessity it brought the King and Nation under of settling the Succession in the House of HANOVER, and giving it an Hereditary Right by Act of Parliament, as long as it continues Protestant. So much Good did God, in his merciful Providence, produce from a Misfortune, which we could never otherwise have sufficiently deplored.

The Fourth Sermon was preach'd upon the Queen's Accession to the Throne, and in the First Year in which that Day was solemnly observed, (for by some Accident or other, it had been overlook'd the Year before) and every one will see, without the Date of it, that it was preach'd very early in this Reign, since I was able only to promise and presage its future Glories and Successes, from the good Appearances of Things, and the happy Turn our Affairs began to take ; and could not then count up the Victories and Triumphs that, for Seven Years after, made it, in the Prophet's Language, a Name, and a Praise among all the People of the Earth. Never did Seven such Years together pass over the Head of any English Monarch, nor cover it with so much Honour : The Crown and Sceptre seem'd to be the Queen's least Ornaments. Those, other Princes wore in
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common with her ; and her great Personal Virtues were the same before, and since. But such was the Fame of her Administration of Affairs at home ; such was the Reputation of her Wisdom and Felicity in chusing Ministers ; and such was then esteemed their Faithfulness and Zeal, their Diligence and great Abilities in executing her Commands ; To such a Height of Military Glory did her Great General and her Armies carry the British Name Abroad ; Such was the Harmony and Concord betwixt Her and Her Allies ; And such was the Blessing of God upon all Her Councils and Undertakings, that I am as sure as History can make me, no Prince of ours was ever yet so prosperous and successful, so loved, esteemed, and honoured, by their Subjects and their Friends, nor near so formidable to their Enemies. We were, as all the World imagined then, just entring on the Ways that promised to lead to such a Peace, as would have answer'd all the Prayers of our Religious Queen, the Care and Vigilance of a most able Ministry, the Payments of a willing and obedient People, as well as all the glorious Toils and Hazards of the Soldierly ; when God, for our Sins, permitted the Spirit of Discord to go forth, and, by troubling sore the Camp, the City, and the Country, (and oh that it had altogether spared the Places sacred to his Worship !) to spoil, for a Time, this beautiful and pleasing Prospect ;
and

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and give us, in its Stead, I know not what---
 our Enemies will tell the rest with Pleasure.
 will become Me better to pray to God to
 restore us to the Power of obtaining such a
 peace, as will be to his Glory, the Safety, Ho-
 nour, and the Welfare of the Queen and Her
 Dominions, and the general Satisfaction of all
 Her High and Mighty Allies.

MAY 2.
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S E R M O N XIII.

Preach'd on the
Death of Queen *Mary*,

A T

St. *AUSTIN*'s, in 1694.

2 *Chron.* Ch. XXXV. part of the 24th
 and 25th *Verses*.

And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah, and Jeremiah lamented for Josiah.

THE Mourning for this good Prince was so great, so universal and unfeign'd, that it became a Pattern to the future Times, and the Standard, as it were, for publick Sorrows; insomuch, that when the Spirit of God would describe the greatest Mourning, by the Prophet *Zechariah*, 12th *Chap.*

Chap. after he has said --- They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son, and shall be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his First-born: As if this were yet too little, the Prophet adds in the 11th Verse; In that Day, there shall be a great Mourning in Ferusalem, as the Mourning of Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddon, which was the Place where good Josiah receiv'd his Death's Wound. The Foundation of this is laid down in the Words of the Text, And all Judah and Ferusalem mourned for Josiah, and Jeremiah lamented for him. All, in a word, of whatsoever Place, City, or Country, State and Quality, that either lov'd their Nation or Religion, mourned for Josiah. Josiah was the good Son of a very bad Father, a young and vain Creature, that sold himself to Wickedness, that sacrificed to all the carved Images, and trespassed more and more, and was cut off untimely by his own Servants, whose Death was indeed most justly revenged by the People of the Land, but not lamented. Josiah, contrary to all this, while he was yet young, began to seek after the God of David his Father, (not of his Father Ammon) and did that which was right in the Sight of the Lord, and declined neither to the Right Hand nor to the Left; He destroyed Idolatry, and took Order for repairing the Temple of God; The King also stood in his Place, and made a Covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his Commandments, and his Testimonies, and his Statutes, with all his Heart, and with all his Soul, to perform the Words of the Covenant which are written in the Book. And least his own Example should not be of Influence enough, he us'd his Regal Power, and caused all that were present at Ferusalem and Benjamin, to stand to it. And the Inhabitants of Ferusalem did according to the Covenant of God, the God of their Fathers. And
Josiah

Josiah took away all the Abominations out of all the Countries, that pertained to the Children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God. And all his Days they departed not from following the Lord the God of their Fathers. These were the good Things *Josiah* did; he was exceeding virtuous and religious himself, and he endeavour'd, not only by Example, but by his Power and Authority, to make his People and Subjects so also. This mov'd them so unfeign'dly and universally to mourn his Loss; but this was not all, for the People knew that God had threatned dreadful Evils to all the Nation, and respited them only for *Josiah's* sake. *Behold, saith the Lord, I will gather thee to thy Fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy Grave in Peace, neither shall thine Eyes see all the Evil that I will bring upon this Place, and upon the Inhabitants of the same.* And knowing this, they could not chuse but be concern'd exceedingly for his Death. They were greatly bless'd and benefited by his Life, and were like to suffer greatly by his Death. No wonder, therefore, if *Jerusalem* and *Judah*, *Jeremiah*, and all good People, mourned and lamented for *Josiah*. A good King is of inestimable Value; and the Truth of it is, these poor People had had so many bad, or at least indifferent ones, that a worser Prince by a great deal than *Josiah*, would have made a good Figure, and have been both belov'd whilst living, and bewail'd when dead: For it was with *Judah*, as it is with other Nations; such as the King is, such will, generally, the People be. Under an idolatrous Prince, the People usually inclin'd to be idolatrous; and when a Prince did *that which was right in the Sight of the Lord*, the People generally conform'd, and did the same. This shews, of what Advantage and Importance 'tis, to have a virtuous and religious Prince

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upon

upon the Throne. It is, in a manner, crowning Virtue and Religion with him, for they will also reign as well as he: Even they who are truly good and virtuous upon Principles, and would be so, in spite of all Discouragement of Custom and Example, of Scorn, Dishonour, and, it may be, to their great Loss; even these are better'd by a good Example from above; they prosecute their good Designs, they continue in their virtuous Courses, with much more Joy, more Heart and Life, when so encourag'd. The Cold, the Lukewarm, and Indifferent, are heated often, by a great Example, into a generous Emulation, and rise up to a Pitch above themselves: Even they who are by Inclination, wicked, rude, and irreligious, do yet learn Decency, Civility, and some good Manners, from a great Example. The Countenance that Piety and good Morality find from great Superiors, restrains a great many brutal Outrages that would be offered to them both, by vile Inferiors, and keeps some Men from impudent and scandalous Offences; so that the Face of Honesty and Goodness is kept up, where there is nothing of the Substance left; which good Appearance is not wholly useless. No one can say, (I doubt) that a good Example is of equal Power and Influence with a bad one; for the Corruption of our Heart is great, and stronger are our Inclinations to Evil than Good; and it is easier much to dissemble being virtuous and religious, than to be truly such; but a good Example does not want much of the Power and Influence of a bad one, as to Mens external and publick Behaviour: They will be as careful to *appear* religious, (if Religion be encourag'd by the Example and publick Practice of the Prince) as they would be ready to be *indeed* wicked, were the Prince so, and would encourage them to follow him. So that next to the being truly virtuous and religious, it were for the
 Good

Good of a Nation, that a Prince would outwardly at least *appear* so, even for Example's sake, and I mean his own Good, as well as that of his People, even the Prosperity of his Affairs. And if the very Countenance, and Face of Virtue, and Religion, be of such Use, what would the Truth and Substance of them do? It is on this account, I think, that we are bid so often to make Prayers and Supplications for Kings and Governors, the Welfare of the World depends so much in general on their Virtue and Goodness. It is not for a Compliment of Honour, nor for their sakes alone, that we are bid to pray continually, that God would *so replenish our Princes with the Grace of his holy Spirit, that they may always incline to his Will, and walk in his Way; that he would endue them plenteously with his heavenly Gifts, and enrich them with his Grace* --- It is not for their sakes only, but for our own also, that we thus pray; for it is by these his Gifts and Graces, we hope they will be enabled to make both themselves and us happy; that under them we may lead our Lives in all Godliness and Honesty, in Peace and Quiet. And what a fearful Condition are the People in, when they to whom they are entrusted, have not the Fear of God before them? When they who are ordain'd of God to be a Terror to evil Works, are a Terror to the Good? When they who by Appointment are the Ministers of God to us for Good, and Revengers to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil, and are ordain'd of God to attend continually upon this very thing, shall think of nothing less, but give themselves to all Injustice, Violence and Oppression, and live as if the World of Subjects were their Slaves, and were not to be treated with Humanity and Equity? As if they utterly forgot, or rather never had Thought upon, the very End of their Institution and Appointment, which is the Preservation of

the World in Peace and Order, for *they are sent,* saith St. Peter, 1. 2. 14. *for the Punishment of evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well.* It is undoubtedly, a heavy Thing for People to fall into such Hands of Wickedness; to be govern'd by such Princes, as know not why they are the Princes of such a People, but because they were born of Princely Parents; and know no other Use of Wealth and Power, but living vainly and luxuriously, and tyrannizing over innocent and quiet People: Such Princes do but ill resemble God, whose Ministers and Vicegerents they are on Earth; for he appoints them for the best of Ends and Purposes, the Good of their respective People; and when they leave considering, and consulting that, they forget the principal End of God's Ordinance and Institution of Government. It is the greatest Praise and Honour we can pay to a religious, just, and virtuous Prince, to represent how odious both to God, and all good Men, how mischievous to Mankind, and how destructive of the End of Government, a wicked and ungodly Prince is; for one is the Foil to the other, and sets him off with all Advantage; he is, as it were, the Guardian-Angel of his Kingdom, still watching over it for Good, and still defending it from Mischief; whereas the other is but as an evil Spirit, powerful only to do Mischief, and doing it most commonly where he should do most Good, to innocent and honest People. The Consideration of these evil Governours cannot chuse but raise the Character and Value of good ones; and by the universal and unfeigned Mourning for *Josiah*, we may conclude, without all doubt or scruple, that he was a good *King*, as well as a good *Jew*, that he was just and faithful to his Charge, a Lover of his Nation, and a true Father of his People, as well as a devout religious Worshipper of God, and zealous for his Honour. For though

whilst Princes live, and are in Power, the People are restrain'd by Fear, and Penal Laws (and that exceeding reasonably and justly) from speaking evil of them; from outwardly expressing either their Hatred or Contempt of wicked and unrighteous Governors; although (I say) they are with-held from this (which would indeed destroy and put an end to all good Government) whilst Princes are alive and well, yet when they come to die (as die they will, and fall like other Men) then it is utterly impossible to keep the Tongues of People in, or hinder them from shewing what they thought before: They will dissemble then no longer; Death equals them in this, as well as other respects, with every body else; Men freely say their Minds of them, and give them Fame and Reputation as they think they have deserv'd. And I believe there is no certainer Indication of the Justice or Violence of a Reign past, than the Concern that is shewn at the Prince's Death, not by the external Garb and Fashion, the Colour, and Solemnity of Pace, and Countenance, but by the Voice and Sorrows of the People, which never will be universal and unfeign'd, but when there is a true Occasion offered them, when they have lost a true Friend, a just, affectionate, and careful Governor. Such, I believe, there is no doubt, but that the universal Mourning for *Josiah* shewed him to be: When *Judah*, and *Jerusalem* and *Jeremiah*, lamented for him, it will amply prove he was a good Prince, and one that studied much the Welfare of the Nation and the City, as well as that he laid the Interests of Religion and God's Service, and the Prophet, closely to his Heart; and this will also help to prove he was a good King. For there is nothing like Religion and the Fear of God, that makes Men careful of advancing and procuring the general Good and Benefit of Mankind; nothing inclines Men to consider more the Ends they are

design'd to answer and fulfill ; nothing disposes them better to Justice and Mercy, to Temperance and Moderation, and all good Qualities that help to make good Governors. Religion does not always make Men wise with the Wisdom of this World, but yet Religion sets Men upon getting as much of that, as they find necessary, to the well discharging of their several Duties, and is consistent with Religion ; and more than that will never be necessary: Religion will not make a King, nor suffer him to be slothful and neglectful of the Means and Methods that are just and fit to procure the Advantage of his People. Religion will not barely permit, but it will excite him to such prudent and discreet Management, as will suffice to make himself and People happy. As for that crafty Over-reach, that extraordinary Refinement upon Politicks, that Readiness of promising every thing that is demanded, and that easiness of breaking all the Bonds and Oaths that tie Society, and keep this World in Peace and Order, I own Religion is an Enemy to this, and will not let a Prince engage in any such ungodly Wisdom. But few, if any, are the Kings that have miscarried through the Tenderneſs of being false to God or Man ; of doing Violence to common Honesty, and Justice, and Religion. This wicked Wisdom of this wicked World has sometimes serv'd a present Turn, it has sometimes deliver'd from a present, or impendent Mischiefe, and gain'd sometimes a wanted and desir'd Advantage. But this is for the present only : It does not serve them long ; a little Time discovers the Deceit ; and the rest of the World are but thereby the more alarm'd, and cautioned into a Jealousy and Watchfulness against them. It is with Princes, as with private Men ; one may deceive another by Pretences of Sincerity and Truth, by fair and specious Promises

Promises, and by Appearance of great Honesty and Justice; he may deceive his Neighbour, credulous, and open-hearted, to his great Damage, it may be, his Undoing. But after all, this is not Wisdom, this is but a Fetch for the present, this Skill will fail him in the next Experiment; all that have heard of his Dexterity, will shun the dealing with him; and apprehend themselves unsafe in such Man's Company, or they will treat with him with so much Watchfulness, such Sharpness and Suspicion, that he shall find himself discovered and laid open, unable to procure the Advantages he otherwise might reasonably have look'd for, and be counted as a common Enemy. It is no otherwise (as far as such as we can see) with Kings and Princes: They who have shewn themselves unjust and violent, faithless and perjur'd once, are never trusted more, without Security and Pledge; they are look'd upon as always ready to do what they have once done; and therefore all their Neighbours grow suspicious, deal with them constantly, as if they were designing nought but Mischief, endeavouring to deprive them of the Power of doing it, whose Will they think is always bent that way, and nothing wanting but the Opportunity. So that upon the Whole, a just, a virtuous and religious Prince, is like to find much better Terms, be better trusted and believed by all his Neighbours, in Confidence of such his Probity and Honour, than others, that have falsified their Faith, upon the most tremendous Oaths, on the most sacred solemn Ties and Obligations, by which a Man can bind his Soul, altho' he also give up cautionary Pledges with them; so advantageous a Thing is the very Reputation of Justice and Religion in a Prince. And therefore it is very rarely seen, that undissembled Virtue and Religion in a King, is not of great

Advantage also to the People, by influencing him to Care and Tenderneſs, to Juſtice and to Mercy, and by reminding him, that *He* muſt alſo give an Account to God, how well or ill he hath diſcharg'd his Duty. *Be wiſe now therefore, O ye Kings, and be inſtructed, ye that are Judges of the Earth*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, 2. 10. and that they might not be to ſeek, what Wiſdom and Inſtruction here is meant, he bids them, 11. *Serve the Lord with Fear*. For *the Fear of the Lord is truly Wiſdom, and to depart from Evil is Underſtanding*, as well, or rather more in Kings, than other Men; becauſe their being good, is of ſuch infinite Concern to all the World.

The thing I have been ſhewing you is this, that *Jofiah* was, in all Probability, a good, a juſt and virtuous Prince, as well as a religious one; and tho' it is not ſo expreſs'd, yet being ſo remarkably religious, I could not help concluding he was therefore juſt and virtuous, becauſe Religion and the Fear of God do ſo naturally, and almoſt neceſſarily, excite Men to the Practice of thoſe, and all other Virtues that are ſo requiſite to the full and due Diſcharge of all their ſeveral Obligations to Mankind; and from that univerſal and unfeign'd Sorrow and Concern ſhewed by the Nation at his Death. The Loſs of this good Prince was alſo made much heavier, by the Conſideration of the Rarity and Scarcity of good Princes. *Judah* indeed ſar'd better in this Point than *Israel*, much; but *Judah* had but little cauſe of boaſting. *Augustus*, it is ſaid, deſign'd *Tiberius* for his Succeſſor, that all the World might want him, and lament his Death; which they both did, and had great cauſe to do for many Years. It is a ſharp Reproach to any preſent Age, to hear Men call for, and commend the former. This Miſchief even good Princes do occaſionally, by bleſſing ſo their own, they make the Times to come leſs tolerable. This alſo 'tis that gives them a ſecond
Fame

Fame and Reputation ; this makes their Loss so great and heavy. All Sorrows (if we mark it) both begin and end at home in Self-love : All our Concern proceeds from apprehending a Loss of something Good, or from fear of something Evil, and Good and Evil to our selves, though may be, at some distance, for our Posterity is also part of our selves. In the Instance before us, it is evident that the fearful Consideration of the Evils to come, threatned from God by *Huldah* the Prophetess, and respited alone for good *Josiah's* Sake, must needs increase their Sorrow for his Death ; they lost the Pledge of their Security and Preservation in him : Upon his single Life hung all their Hopes of Safety. How strong a Motive should this be, to make and keep a Prince Just, Virtuous and Religious, when for the sake of such, God will suspend, at least sometimes remove his Judgments justly threatned to a wicked People ? And how great Reason does this afford to People, to wish and pray, their Kings may be just such as God describes them ; 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 3. *The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God.* And how great Cause of Sorrow and Lamenting does the Loss of such a Prince afford ? And I believe it will be no ill Guess, nor far from Truth, to think the Spirit of God recorded, by the Author of these Books, the solemn and the general Mourning of of the Land, and its Inhabitants, for this good King, with some Design of provoking other Kings to imitate his good Qualities. I am sure it is a Use that they should make of such a memorable Passage. For besides the great Advantage (that I have mention'd) which both themselves and Subjects reap from their being Good, and Virtuous, and Religious, it is also the readiest and the surest
Way

Way to Fame and Immortality of Honour here in this World. And this is a Consideration that, more or less, prevails with all Princes. And indeed they have such a Share of Fame, among Posterity, that they ought to take good heed what Kind of Fame it is. For after such a Number of Years are past, and Men forget Particulars, the general Good or Evil of the Times they liv'd in, mark their Reigns for Good or Evil; and Men, to ease their Memories, call them the happy or unhappy Reigns of such and such Kings. Now nothing gives, nothing establishes a better Reputation to a Prince, than Justice, Virtue, and Religion. Great Victories, and glorious Triumphs over conquer'd Nations, give the Life of Fame; but this is a Fame Men make Exceptions to; Posterity will call in Question these Proceedings; the conquer'd Nations call them Tyrannies, and Usurpations, unjust Invasions, mighty Robberies, and Princely Villanies; there will be still disputing about the Fame and Reputation of these great Names, and still the just, the quiet, the sober, and the unambitious Part of Mankind will be inclin'd to pity the Distress'd, and to condemn the bold Disturbers of the Quiet and Repose of Kingdoms. Whereas the Fame of being Just, and Virtuous, and Religious, is assented to by all; is undisputed, forwarded, increas'd, admir'd, and lov'd by every one; it gains all Parties, makes amends for great Miscarriages, is talk'd of, and remembred with Delight and Satisfaction. The Way to the Temple of Honour, lay of old, through the Temple of Virtue; and so I believe and hope it will always do: The Fame of being Virtuous and Religious, as it is better grounded, so it is surer, and will last much longer, than that of being any Thing besides, and is much easier to be

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be purchas'd. This Princes would do well to think on; as they desire to be delivered to Posterity, so they must e'en behave themselves to the present Age they live in: For however ready People are to flatter and applaud the Acts of *living Kings*, yet few regard *the Dead*; or are afraid to speak the Truth of such as neither can reward nor punish. This is a Use that Kings may make of this so general undissembled Sorrow for the Death of a good and godly King, recorded so particularly in Holy Scriptures; who, since they are ambitious generally of a *good* Fame, as well as *great*, may find the readiest and the nearest Way to it, lies by Justice, Virtue, and Religion.

— I have been all this while describing a Prince of extraordinary Qualities, one that set out exceeding early in the ways of Goodness, and held that Course to his Life's End; one that destroyed the Worship of carved Images, and took great Care to repair the Temple of the true God; one that redeemed the Law, and restor'd it to its old Dominion: That made a Covenant with God himself, to live as became a good Prince, and one that us'd his Regal Authority, to cause his Servants and Subjects to do the like, if his Example wrought not with them: And one, that when he died, was universally and most unfeignedly lamented by all *Judah*, and *Jerusalem*, and *Jeremiah*; by all the City, and all the Country, and by the Prophets of the Lord. And I believe, I am prevented in the Application, by almost every one that hears me. The Parallel is so exact, that whilst I have been talking of *Josiah*, I know you have been thinking of *the QUEEN Edward* the VIth, has been most generally call'd the *good Josiah*. And there was indeed a great Resemblance betwixt them for the Years that
Edward

Edward liv'd. But he died betimes: And there is great Difference betwixt a very promising and hopeful Prince of Sixteen, and one that liv'd to a mature Age with the free Exercise of Regal Power. And besides, his Innocence, his sweet and easy Temper became a Prey to a most sacrilegious and rapacious Generation of Men, which in some Measure help'd to mitigate the Universal Sorrow that his Death occasion'd; although that fatal Breach let in a Sea of Blood and Misery upon this poor Kingdom, and gave it such a

Taste of the severe Vengeance that a superstitious Worship of God returning Home in Triumph, from a Six Years Exile and Ejectment both requir'd and took, that I heartily hope it never will forget. But there is a more exact Conformity betwixt *Josiah*, and the present Subject of our Sorrows, than any Prince besides we have ever had. Her Heart, like his, was early set to seek God; and we have seen in her, the Truth of what that God tells us, that *they who seek him early, find him*. For she has never yet deceiv'd the Hopes that a severely virtuous and religious Education gave us; nor once occasion'd a suspicious Fear in any of her Friends. But, on the contrary, shone out, continually, a fair and great Example to the whole Nation, of a most firm, sincere, and unaffected Piety towards God. Nor was she satisfied to do her Duty single and alone, but, as the Mistress of a large and numerous Family, took care that all who any ways depended on her, should worship God, as well as she her self; she did not only give them her Example, and Opportunity of Place and Time, but laid Restraint upon them, us'd her Authority and Power to make them at least appear, as frequent at, and serious in Devotions, as they truly ought to be. She took away the

the Scandal and Reproach that long had lain upon the Court, the want of good Example in a Prince. I should be loth to raise her Character at any one's Expence or Cost besides. Her Virtue and Devotion stand in need of no Advantage, by Comparison. I dare not think that such Degrees of Goodness are so absolutely necessary to every private Christian, much less to every Prince, that without them, they may not be, through God's Mercy, both good and happy People. And therefore I have no Design to represent her otherwise, than imitable by every private Christian. I am not inclin'd to say one Word, but what I think you all believe beforehand. The Place we stand in, and the Men we are, forbid us to *invent*, or speak Uncertainties, or any Thing that will not some ways tend to Edification. Nor is there need of any Thing besides; for we are able, with good Assurance, to present to all her People, a young, a beautiful and powerful Queen, a perfect Pattern for their Imitation, in all that is exactly virtuous or religious. Her Station was so much malign'd, that, hearing nothing of this Head, from the most scrupulously Curious, nice Observers of her Life, we ought in Reason to conclude her truly holy and unblamable to all the World; and God alone can see into the Heart. The External of a Man, is only known to Man, and that alone can be propos'd to Imitation. And therefore, e'er I leave this Head, I wish I might effectually recommend her publick outward Carriage in the House of God, to all this Audience, and especially to those of her own Sex. It was so decent, unaffectedly devout, so grave, so serious and compos'd, that it is fit for every one to think on, and to reform that Light and gay Behaviour that is much too common

in these Places. She knew the Eyes of all were oft intent upon her, and therefore took all heed to a good Example; but knew moreover she herself was more immediately in God's Presence, and therefore so behav'd her self, as best becomes an humble Supplicant before the Throne of his adorable all-powerful Majesty. These Things become us to commend, because they are so fit for private Imitation; frequent Attendance upon God's Service, and a Religious grave Deportment there, are Duties by Command; and 'tis not much to hope they may be greatly promoted by so extraordinary an Example. But these, and a great many more good Qualities that I may not now concern my self, or you withal, shew us how great and universal our Loss is; and greater yet is like to be, if we will make no use of her Example, *for then we have lost her quite.* The Imitation of the commendable Qualities of the Dead, is all the Advantage that the living ones can make of them: And 'tis but common Wisdom to provide and see, that they do not leave us Sorrow and Affliction only, when they have done their best to leave us Virtue and Religion also, if we will pursue them in their Steps. But here I hope the Parallel will end, and that our Sorrows have but one Foundation; whereas the Sorrows of the *Jews* had Two, and the latter very dreadful. *Josiah* was an excellent Virtuous and Religious Prince, and did a world of Good while he liv'd, which ended with him; the Remembrance of this might well occasion great and universal Mourning for him; the Death of a good and godly Prince is an inestimable Loss, and inexpressible. But then his Death let in a world of Misery, it let in old Idolatry, and fearful Superstition, it let in a most woful De-

struction of the City, and a long and sad Captivity of the People. This frightful Prospect both the Prophet and the People had, and knew that God had spar'd them whilst *Josiah* liv'd, but then resolv'd to execute his Vengeance to the full; this made his Life so dear and valuable, and this occasioned him when dead, to be lamented with such Bitterness and Anguish. Here we are full of Hope the Parallel will break off and fail. Our Prospect forward is not, God be prais'd, so black and dreadful. Our Sorrows are as just and due for what is lost and gone, as those of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, but not our Fears for what we have in View. We are not so bewildred and entangled yet in our Affairs, but we can see our Way out, though obscurely and by a glimmering Light, if we provoke not God to strike us deeper. Our Case is hazardous enough to give us Fears, not faint, nor very distant, nor uncertain; but strong, and reasonable, and near enough to make us careful, diligent and watchful, to set us upon thinking, and providing against threatned Evils; but most especially to stir us up to Union and Agreement, to settle Peace and Quietness at Home, that we may have but one Thing to attend to, one Danger to eschew and to provide against, namely, the *Common Enemy*; who, without Question, makes Account to improve the sad Occasion of our Mourning to his Advantage, and our utter Ruin. But let us shew him we are fully sensible our Loss is great enough, without any Augmentation he shall make; and that we will not help him, as he hopes, by our Divisions, to make our selves more miserable than we now are, or need to be. God does not, that we know, intend our Ruin, but Amendment; we still have Pledges of his Love
remaining

remaining with us, and therefore have no cause to doubt his farther Favours; if we will set about deserving them. All we have therefore left to do, is to humble our selves under the mighty Hand of God, to deprecate his farther Anger and Displeasure, to make the Use that he intends by this Infliction, to call to mind our Evil Ways, our Sins and Provocations, to repent us truly and sincerely of them, and shew we do so, by our leaving them, and taking up with better Things for the Time to come, and to implore the Assistance of his Grace to put these good Designs in Execution.





P R E F A C E.

I Give this Sermon up to the Desires of a great many good People of the Parishes of St. Austin, and St. Dunstan in the West, to whom I can deny nothing of this Nature, which they shall find reasonable to ask of me: But not to their Desires only, but also to the Hopes I have, that, from something or other hinted at in it, other Wise and Virtuous People may be put upon considering, whereabouts we are; and on contributing all that lies in them, to the preventing whatever Evils we may apprehend from the great Loss we have sustained in the Death of the most Noble and most Hopeful Prince, the Duke of GLOUCESTER. I know, I have no other Aims than these, in making this Sermon Publick; and they who know me well, will, I believe, think so too: I undertake not therefore to defend the Irregularity of some of my Thoughts, nor the Order in which they are ranged. They were produc'd in Grief and deep Concern, and that, I think, may in some sort, excuse them with tender and good-natur'd People. I am only careful of guarding against Two Sorts of Men; First, Such as will

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needs

needs call this great Misfortune, a Judgment of God, for what hath passed amongst us. Secondly, Such as will certainly try to make it one, as soon as ever they can. To the first, we must freely own, we have deserved God's greatest Judgments, but not for the Causes they assign; and freely own, that this Misfortune has the Face of one, and is as heavy as a Judgment; and therefore I hope all People will improve under it, and make as good use of it, as if it were indeed a Judgment. But till they shall produce some certain and impartial Rules by which they proceed in forming Censures, and in applying them to Nations, or to private People, they will give us leave, I hope, to suspend. And to the Second Sort, who think to turn a Kingdom into a Commonwealth, I can only say, that I hope, the Extent of our Dominions, the Number of our Nobility, the Honour of our Gentry, the Genius of our People, and the whole Current of our Laws, will always provide us with a ready Answer to an impudent and clamorous Faction. God, I hope, will evermore preserve us from a Species of Government, as ill fitted for our Nation, as Popery is for our Religion.



S E R M O N XIV.

O N T H E

Death of the most Hopeful Prince,

William Duke of Gloucester.

On P S A L M CXLVI. Verse 3, 4, 5.

*O put not your Trust in Princes, nor in any
Child of Man, for there is no help in them.*

*For when the Breath of Man goeth forth, he
shall turn again to his Earth; and then all
his Thoughts perish.*

*Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob
for his help, and whose hope is in the Lord
his God.*

WE know not who it was, that composed
this *Psalm*, nor what it was that occa-
sion'd it: But the Providence of God furnisheth
all People with Occasions more than enow, of
applying these words to themselves, but too too
pertinently. It hath furnish'd Us with One, not
X 2 many

many Years ago, so very proper, that it gives fresh and lively Pain to every one that remembers it, with half the Consideration it deserves. It furnishes us *now* with another, of which no living Man, perhaps, can see the Consequence at full, but every one can see enough to drive him to Sorrow and Amazement, and cause him to say, with the *Psalmist*, *The Lord is King, the Earth may be glad thereof; yea, the Multitude of the Isles may be glad thereof*: Glad, that their Affairs are in the Hands of him, who *has* all Power, and *is* all Wisdom, and all Goodness, who bringeth Light out of Darkness, Good out of Evil, and can turn every Thing to their Advantage, who serve him truly.

Whether it were, that the *Psalmist* here directs himself against the common Inclination of Men, which is, to build great Hopes upon the Promises of Princes and great Men, and rather to depend on them, than on God above, who keepeth his Promise for ever; or whether the Death of some great Prince had given the *Jews*, in their Captivity, some mighty Disappointment; whatever it was that occasion'd the Composing of this *Psalm*, 'tis plain the Words of the Text advise us, *First*, Not to put our Trust in Princes, nor any Child of Man: And that for this Reason, *There is no help in them, because when the Breath of Man goeth forth, he shall turn again to his Earth, and all his thoughts perish*. Secondly, They direct us where we are to place our Trust and Confidence, and that is in God; *Blessed is he that hath the God of Jacob for his Help, and whose Hope is in the Lord his God*. I. Of the Person in whom we are not to place our Trust and Confidence, and they are Princes: *Put not your Trust in Princes, i. e. in no Body, no Child of Man*; for if you might in any

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any Body, you might in *them*, because they have most Power, and more Opportunities of answering to your Confidence, than any Men besides. I see no Reason to think that any Thing is here said to the Disparagement of Princes, as though they were to be trusted less than other Men, for Falseness or Forgetfulness of Promises: And therefore to *trust*, is not here put for *believing*: But they are rather here consider'd, as the faithfullest, as well as the most powerful Managers of human Affairs, of the best Intentions, as well as greatest Abilities, both to design and execute great Matters; and yet, not to be entirely depended on, for other Reasons. 'Tis much the same that is express'd in Psalm cxvi. 8, 9. *It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any Confidence in Princes, i. e.* the chiefest and best of Men: And the Reason here assigned, why they are not so to be trusted and depended on, namely, because they are so subject to Death, delivers them from all Suspicion of Blame. To put our Trust therefore in Princes, does, in this Place, signify, to think the Settlement of their Affairs so strong and sure, that nothing can disturb them; to trust so to the Wisdom of their Management, their Valour, and their Might, their good Intentions, and their great Abilities, as to be quite secure, and to suspect no Change can happen; it either signifies this Confidence, which is innocent, though inconsiderate; or this Confidence with Impiety, trusting in the Arm of Flesh alone, and vaunting with the foolish Man, who saith in his Heart, *Tush, I shall never be moved, no harm shall happen to me.* If the Trust that is here dissuaded from, be contrary to, or exclusive of, that Trust we always ought to put

in God, then to be sure it is condemn'd, and sinful; but if it be only a weak and groundless Trust, then there is less Offence than Folly in it, and the heavy Disappointments it must needs meet, will punish it sufficiently. Sometimes we see a Prince truly noble, just, and merciful, wise and brave, a Father of his Country, a Lover of his People, careful of all their Interests and their Honour, and born, as it were, to the Good of Mankind: It would be impossible not to put great Confidence in such a Prince, and to hope a Nation will be happy under such Administration, whilst he lives; this Sort of Trust is reasonable, because 'tis built upon so good Ground. Another Time, we see a Prince of beauteous Aspect, lovely Disposition, inclin'd to Learning, Virtue, Piety, and full of all good Qualities; it would be Stupidity not to hope well of him, and to promise our selves a Harvest answerable to a Field of so fair Shew; such Hope and Confidence as this becomes us, as we are reasonable and considering Creatures, and it would be a kind of Ingratitude to God, from whom we acknowledge all these Gifts and Graces come, not to conceive such Hopes as such excellent Endowments promise: A Man must shut his Eyes on Providence, that will not make his Observations on what passes, and collect what is most reasonable and likely. For since God acts by reasonable Causes, and procures our Peace and Happiness by Instruments that are in Nature proper for that Purpose, we owe it to him, to expect it from them, where they are so promising. This is properly to trust in God; for to look for *Grapes from Thorns, or Figs from Thistles*, is to hope against Nature, and against Reason, and not be excused by any Reverence we pretend to God, or Dependence on his Power, though he is truly able to produce those Fruits
from

from those unnatural Stocks. The Men of no Religion, and no Thought, are so intent upon these *second* Causes, that they see no *first*, nor will acknowledge any Supreme Power, that overlooks and governs our Affairs, but governs them by Nature and by Reason: But they who trust to one, still in Subordination to the other, in constant Dependance on him, and always in his Power to change and suspend, as he sees fit, do truly put their Trust in *God*, even when they put their Trust in Princes. They look for Rest and Security in Peace, where Kings are virtuous, wise, and watchful, and the People are at Unity; for Victory in War, where Generals are brave and wary, the Soldiers healthy, numerous, obedient and courageous, and well paid, *i. e.* they promise to themselves the natural Effects of Wisdom, Strength, and Concord; but all from God, who is to bless these natural and these moral Causes. They look for plenteous Harvests, where the Fields are full and flourishing, but know, 'tis God that made them so, and he that is to bring them in. This Confidence he does himself raise in us, and therefore never is offended with it, because 'tis built upon the Confidence we have, that he will suffer Things to go on orderly and naturally, unless we provoke him to change or suspend the common Course of them. And though our Disappointments are very great, and very many, yet might our Hopes and Expectations be very reasonable, and just, and are not to be condemned by an unhappy Issue. If our Trust in *Princes* exclude not our Trust in *God*, we need not be afraid it will be faulty. Nor does the *Psalmist* here condemn such Trust for its Impiety, but rather, (for the avoiding troublesome and heavy Disappointments) would

dissuade us from putting so much Trust in Princes, whose Lives are so uncertain, and look up to God more ardently and frequently, whose Mercy, and Goodness, like himself (they are himself) endure for ever. I think it is a kind Advice, not to raise in our Minds Hopes that are so easily defeated, and when defeated, so vexatious and afflicting. *Put not your Trust in Princes, nor in any Child of Man, for there is no help in them.* There is no Help in Man in many Cases; a Thousand and Ten Thousand Evils befall us, wherein the Wisdom, Skill, the Riches, and the Strength of all Mankind, can give no Help, afford no Comfort. If we want Rain, or have too much of it, Can all the World procure a Shower, or hinder it from falling? Can it procure a favourable Wind, or hinder a contrary one from blowing? Can it recover Health, where it is wanting, to the Good of Thousands; or restore a precious Life, that is, like David's, worth Ten Thousand? The utmost of human Power, for ought that appears, is but an Ability of doing huge Mischief; and the best of it is, an Ability of hindring one another from doing Mischief. But when we want Assistance, in most of our Extremities, Oh how unable is this World to give it! The wisest, richest, and most powerful Men want Help themselves, and neither can afford it to themselves, nor others; there is indeed no Help in them. *For when the Breath of Man goeth forth, he shall return again to his Earth, and then all his Thoughts perish.* The very best is here suppos'd of the very ablest of them, that they may be full of good Intentions, form great and good Designs, have their Hearts wholly bent on honouring God, promoting Virtue,

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and profiting Mankind, seeking the Interest of their People, doing Justice, shewing Mercy, and imitating Him, whose Ministers and Substitutes they are. Happy for them, that they are full of these Designs! No better Thoughts can possibly possess their Hearts, or employ their Hours; the King of Kings, the mighty Master of them all, shall bless them, and reward them, whom he finds so doing. But this is, much too often, all they do; they form a Multitude of brave Designs, and live to effect but few! *I have said ye are Gods, but ye shall die like Men*; and this *they* find, and *we* find also. Poor Princes, poor People! They raise our Hopes, and they destroy them suddenly. We gather up all our Trust, and place it on their Lives, and in a Day or Two, those Lives are spilt like Water on the Ground. They are, as the Prophet calls them, *the Breath of our Nostrils*: And Nations sometimes seem to live in them, and only to breath their Breath; and yet *their Breath goeth forth*, like other Peoples Breath, and *they return again to their Earth*, (*their Earth as well as ours*) and then all *their Thoughts perish*, and all *our Thoughts* too, with them: But not our Thoughtfulness, that still survives, to trouble every wise considering Man. Our Thoughts are in this Place our Hopes, and they expire with the Breath of him who kindled them. His Thoughts, who rais'd our Thoughts, perish, and therefore ours must perish with them. Who can enough esteem those Lives, which by Experience are found so useful to the World, to the securing its Tranquillity and Happiness; or those who from their earliest Infancy, have promised all the Good that Men can look for, from the most virtuous towardly Disposition, and whose precocious

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cious Advances could not fail of giving us some jealous Fears, with our most lively Hopes! Who can enough esteem such Lives, if we consider these fine Qualities! And who can value them too little, or trust too little in them, who considers how soon *their Breath goeth forth, and they return again to Earth, and all their Thoughts perish!* What must we do in this Uncertainty? Our Affairs require a Life as durable as Brass, and the Laws of our Mortality will admit of none, but what is subject to a Thousand certain, and a Thousand accidental Evils, each of which may break us all to pieces. Let us do any Thing in this Uncertainty, but blame the Providence of God, who hangs the Good of so much People, on so small a Thread: For Righteous are his Ways, and Just his Government, whatever we may fear, whatever we endure.

But may I not, unblam'd, say with the Prophet *Jerem. 12. 1.* (I know I say it with all Deference and Humility) *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with Thee of thy Judgments?* When thou, in Mercy, turnedst away the Captivity of our Zion, we were like them that dream; when our Enemies were just upon us, *they stumbled and fell; then was our Mouth fill'd with Laughter, and our Tongue with Joy.* The greatest Enemies we had, could not forbear proclaiming, *The Lord hath done great Things for them.* We could not our selves, in Gratitude, forbear proclaiming, *The Lord hath done great Things for us already, whereof we rejoice.*

Either to temper these Felicities, or punish our Ingratitude, thou stopp'dst up, for ever, the Breath of our Nostrils; *The anointed of the Lord was taken away*

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away from us, of whom we said, under her Shadow we shall live (not among the Heathen, but at home) in Plenty and Security.

To shew thou didst intend but to correct, and not to give us over unto Death, thou didst, by unexpected Instruments, deliver the Life of the King from Fear of the Enemy, and from the Snare of the Hunter; Thou savedst him from Destruction, and crownedst him with Mercy and Loving-kindness; and mad'st him instrumental in procuring the Desire of all our Hearts, an honourable Peace; the Opportunity of healing all our Wounds, recovering all our Losses, and making up the Breaches our intestine Foes, our foolish Discords, and ill grounded Animosities had occasion'd; the Opportunity of settling our Affairs, and looking to the Ground we stood upon; of putting them in such a Posture, that neither Enemies abroad, nor Enemies at home, might give us any great Disturbance; that the Religion of our Country, and its most ancient, properest, and best tempered Government, might be secured, against the Attempts and Machinations of its old inveterate Enemies, the Sons of Violence and Darkness, and from the noisy Importunities of unexperienced, raw, new-fangled Schematists, and Speculators. But contrary to this, the Spirit of Discord is gone out among us, and the sweet Hope of all the Kingdom is in a Moment snatch'd away from us; e're we had Time to try to move thee by our Prayers, or Time to apprehend a Stroke so painful and so mortal. Thy former Favours did not promise such Conclusion. But we will hold our Peace, since 'tis thy doing; We are much surer thou may'st in Justice, thus chastise us for our Sins, than we could be that thou hadst so much Mercy for such Sinners, as we have, all our Lives, experienced from thee. Permit us never

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ver so long to talk with thee of thy Judgments, yet must we still conclude, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when we plead with thee.*

Such Losses, and such heavy Disappointments, needs must prove effectual Cures of all our Confidence in Princes. Never were Hopes more justly rais'd, nor placed more reasonably, than ours have been, upon two Noble Objects; and yet six Years have quite defeated them, dried up our Springs, and almost desolated a Royal Tribe, one of the fairest and most fruitful in the World. How short is our Prospect now! In what a little Compass is our Kingly Family contained! Two precious Lives make up our whole Treasure!

The People of the *East*, we find in Scriptures, address'd to their Princes, with—*O King, Live for ever.* 'Tis a vain Compliment to Men of Flesh and Blood, whose Breath goeth forth so suddenly, who dye like other Men, who return again to their Earth, and whose Thoughts all perish in a Moment; but if 'twere ever reasonable, our Case would call for it, and we would use it. May God enlarge these Borders! Build to these Princes a sure House! And bind up their Souls in the Bundle of Life! A long one here for our Sakes, and, for their own, an Everlasting one in Heaven!

II. Let us now withdraw from this uncomfortable Side. The Lives of Princes are, it seems, like Lands of Darknes, where every Step we make, is in Distrust and Fear: They give us little but Alarms, Defeats, and Disappointments. Let us seek a Country of more Light and Safety, where Hope dwells, and where we may abide with Confidence. *Blessed is he who hath the God of Jacob for his Help, and whose Hope is in the Lord his God.* This is a Life, and Will, and Power, we may

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may depend upon; *Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised, there is no End of his Greatness. The Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works. His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and his Dominion endureth throughout all Ages.* These are Foundations strong enough for all the Trust and Confidence a Heart can hold. He is of infinite Goodness to intend the Happiness of all his Creatures, of infinite Wisdom to know wherein it lies, and of infinite Power to effect his wise and good Designs towards us. Here, therefore, we may place our Trust, without any Fears of Disappointment; here we must fix our Hopes, for here we can only find our Help.

Were there not such a Power above, to overlook and govern Men, and their Affairs, what a Place of Misery and Confusion would this World be? What with the Certainty of natural Causes, working many sad Effects, tho' known before, yet unavoidable; what with the Multitude of fearful Accidents, never to be prevented nor foreseen; what with the Folly, Ignorance, Mistakes, the Malice and Perverseness, and the Rage of one another's Passions, how wretched a Thing would the Life of Man be!

The Ways of God, I think, are to permit natural Causes to work their natural Effects, according to the Powers he hath endued them with; reserving to himself the Power of altering or suspending them, as he sees fit, and when he pleases; and to suffer Men to act as free Agents, having given them Reason, and reveal'd his Will to them, and laid down all sufficient Motives, to restrain them from what they know is evil, and to encourage them to what is truly good; reserving
to

to himself, however, the Power of changing their Inclinations, directing them in their Designs, and influencing them all, as he sees fit. By which Means, neither the Certainty of natural Operations, nor the Freedom of Man's Will, exclude his Government of Men and Nature, nor hinder us from addressing to him, by *Prayer*, for what we want, and *Praise* for what we have received ; both which would be in vain, were Nature not to be diverted from her Way, nor the Will of Man flexible, by some superior over-ruling Power. Were Nature's Course unalterably fix'd, and the Will of Men not to be moved, Prayer would be insignificant and useless. Were not Men at Liberty, in general, they could not be accountable for what they did, they could have neither Vice nor Virtue. Were not the Laws of Nature fix'd, we could not live in any sort of Certainty, we could not undertake any thing, nor could have any Hope or Expectation of succeeding. But as it pleases God to govern by these two known Rules, and to be still the Master of them both, there is all the room that can be for our Endeavours, Care and Vigilance, our Virtue, and our Studies, and all the Reason and Grounds for our applying to him, our trusting in him, and dependance upon him. Our Hope and Trust in God, must therefore be directed by these settled and established Rules of Providence. These are the known and standing Laws of his wise Government ; the rest is Dispensation, Favour, Grace, and sometimes Miracle. Dispensation, Grace and Favour, we may innocently hope for, pray for, and expect, from his indulgent Goodness, where no establish'd Law of Nature is subverted ; but for a Miracle, 'tis much more reasonable to wish for, than expect one in our Favour. We

know

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know that nothing is impossible with God ; but yet our Hope is never equal to his Power ; nor do we ever trust in him for any thing uncommon, without some Promise in particular. We know it is as possible for God to restore again the Dead to Life, as Health to a diseased Man ; what is the Reason, then, that we do not importune him with our most earnest and united Prayers, to give us back that dear, inestimable Life we have so lately parted with ; but that we think he signifies his Will and Pleasure to us, by the known stated Course of Nature, and know we have no Reason to look for Miracles ? Death would not give us such Despair immediately, but that we measure the Power of God by the common Exercise of it in the World. And so 'tis with putting our Trust in him ; we can carry it no farther than he gives us Leave by his common Rules, or by particular Promise. When therefore the *Psalmist* would invite us *to hope in God, and put our Trust in him*, he would not have us raise in our selves Expectations of Things strangely unusual and unlikely ; nor to believe that God will do for us, or bring to pass whatever we expect or wish for, or what we think we want. But we may hope, and trust in him, for every thing, that is in itself reasonable, and fit for him to give, and for us to receive.

Our Passions often put us upon asking what is not in it self very reasonable to expect ; no matter, provided it be nothing wicked and forbidden, and nothing to the Prejudice and Injury of any one else. Our Parents, and our Friends, live here, even beyond the common Term of human Life ; and we yet desire of God, they may continue longer with us, and we may hope that he will hear our Prayers. This does not seem very reasonable, when we consider the Life of Man, and call to Mind the Years that are past, and observe how it has always been with other People : But yet 'tis very innocent and lawful
so

so to do; because we know of no set Term of Days, beyond which none shall pass; that is still in the Hands of God; and because the protracting of that Life is to *us*, we think, of Use, and to no one's Wrong.

The Child is dying, there, of a malignant Fever, a Train, as it were, of liquid Fire, is running thro' its Veins, and burning up the Life, that has been the Desire of I know not how many Years past, and the Hopes of I know not how many more to come; the Parents pray to God, in earnest, you may be sure, and put their Trust in him, and hope he will extinguish this unnatural Flame; and this they do, when Remedies are ineffectual, Physicians found of no Value, and every Thing about them, bids them give it up for lost. The Thing they ask is lawful, the Time is not too late, the Work is not impossible in Nature, and God is the Master of all. The Event alone could declare, whether it were not fit for God to give this Life, or for the Parents to receive it. Their Confidence in God was well plac'd, although their Hopes and Desires were disappointed. If Reasons were to be sought for, in such Cases, out of, or beyond what natural Causes teach us, we may be sure that God denies us, with as much Reason as he gives us, what we ask. We must not therefore think our Hopes were wrong placed, and our Confidence in God ill-grounded, and our Prayers in vain, because we receive not what we ask so earnestly: Because it is the Power and Goodness of God, which justifies our Hope and Trust in him, and which encourages us to pray; and this his Power is not diminished by our Disappointment, nor is his Goodness the less, in his not granting what we thought (not *He*) convenient for us. It is im-

possible

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possible (as I have before said) to pray to God without believing him *kind* to intend our Good, *wise* to discern what is our Good, and *powerful* to procure it. These are the very Reasons of Prayer, and the Motives of addressing to God for what we think we want: And these are the Foundations of all our Hope and Confidence in him. And yet these are the very Reasons, why our Prayers may not be heard, and our Hopes not answer'd, and yet God be still as merciful and well intention'd towards us, as when he grants our Requests. We suppose him *good*, to intend our Happiness; he may therefore be good in withholding from us, what we think is good for us, but is not. We suppose him to be *all-wise*, and therefore refer it to him to chuse for us. How do we know he does not exercise his great Discernment, in refusing to us what *we* think is good for us, but what he knows is not? Shall we only think *he* judges right, when he judges as *we* judge, and measure out his Wisdom by our Affections and Desires? If we believe him wise enough to chuse for us, the same Reason will shew him full as wise in his refusing what we ask of him; yes, and full as *kind* too, if we would believe *that* is good for us to have, which he gives, and that not good (all Things consider'd) which he withholds from us. But the Misfortune is, that we measure Good by our own Affections and Desires; that is good, we think, which we seem to want, and to set our Hearts upon, and nothing else can satisfy.

Let your Father be Seventy Years of Age, and your Child Seven, the first a wise and virtuous Man, a Life that is necessary to you, and useful to the Commonwealth, and all that are about him; the other, as the rest of Children are, hopeful enough: If some Distemper put these Two Lives into equal
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Danger, you will do what you can for both; and you will pray for them both, and trust in God for both their Healths and Safety: But both of them die, and Nature swallows up the Concern for the Parent, in the Grief for the Child; and because the Bias of Affection is strongest on that Side, our Hope and Confidence seem more defeated, and our Prayers, we think, less heard, in the one Case, than the other. 'Tis plain, we consider not the Usefulness of the Aged Life (the Continuance of which was certainly the greater Good) in respect of the Dearness of that little Life, which yet we could not tell what it might prove. These Things shew us, a little, that we are govern'd more by our Affections, than our Reason; and that as they make us pray more earnestly, and hope more firmly, so they make our Disappointments much more heavy, and occasion us to think our Trust and Confidence in God were *deceiv'd*, when they were only *not answered* according to our Wishes. But wherein then stands the Blessedness of having God for our Help, and hoping in the Lord our God, if he will only help us in the Way of Nature, and we may only hope for what is reasonable and fit? Why, this is as much as any reasonable Man can look for, or desire. The utmost that a reasonable Creature can hope for, is to be favoured and succeeded by God in all his reasonable and honest Undertakings, by Means that are natural, and common to him with all the World. 'Tis a great Support to the Mind of Man, to believe himself under the Protection of a Power, that is able and ready to secure him, whilst he is acting reasonably and honestly; able to continue on the Course of Nature in its established Settlement, by which Men live in good Hope, and Expectation of Success; by which they plow and sow, and hope to reap and gather in their Harvest; by which they

study,

study, labour, venture out to Sea, and hope to gain the Fruits of each, in its due Season: Able to prevent a great many mischievous Events; able to remove all Hindrance and Impediment in the Course of Nature; able to influence Peoples Minds, by diverting them from enterprizing Things that would do hurt to others; and by throwing little Occasions in their Way, of doing Good; and able, by a Thousand and Ten Thousand little undiscernible Means, to secure our Happiness, and prevent our Misery; to turn the Accidents that look as if they would swallow us up in Ruin, into the Means of our Security and Preservation; to dissipate those Clouds of Misfortunes that are ready to burst upon our Heads, and overwhelm us, and give us Day again, with Calm, and Safety. I can't tell how a Man can live in such a World as this, with any Joy, that does not verily believe, and much depend upon the Providence of God; and that, without expecting Miracles, or Favours very much out of Course, but only looking for such as are consistent with his known Rules of Government. What should we do without this everlasting Source of Comforts, this powerful Refuge under all Distresses? How many sore Calamities, publick as well as private, do we fall into, out of which no human Power or Wisdom can deliver us, nor shew us any Way out of? And how must this perplex a Man, unless there were a Being above, kind and able, to have Recourse to? Hope is the Food and Sustenance of the Mind, and Men will live a great while upon it, and all the while much easier, though in Misery; whereas the same Afflictions would, without that Hope, oppress them quite, and drive them to Despair and Madness. And this must often be the Case, were not the World, and Men, and their Affairs, all in the Hands of God, and in his Government, who can

do every Thing, beyond what we are able to ask or think. And who would part with such a sure Foundation of Trust, and Hope, and Confidence, that is not weary of his Life? Who would let go this *Rock of Ages*, for any Thing else he can lay hold on, in this World? Oh may we never be forsaken by him! Yea rather, may we never first forsake him! The Life of Princes is a Mole of Sand; all the Stability of human Things, is the Stability of Wind and Water, changing their Face, shifting their Places every Moment; God alone abideth for ever, God alone is worthy of our Trust, and never will deceive it. 'Tis He alone who can extricate us out of all our Difficulties, wipe away all our Tears and Sorrows from our Hearts, deliver us from our Enemies, protract our Princes Lives, save us by Few as well as Many, give us no more Occasions of Complaint and Lamentation, and turn *even this* to our Advantage; give us the Spirit of Unity and Love of one another, of Wisdom to direct us in our publick Resolutions, and to improve under all the several Dispensations of his Providence. *Is any Rock like our Rock? Who is so great a God as our God? Be thou exalted Lord in thine own Strength, so will we sing and praise thy Power.*



S E R M O N XV.

Preach'd at

St. *Austin's*, in 1703,

UPON THE

Death of King *William*.

2 S A M. Chap. II. Verse 7.

*Therefore now, let your Hands be strenghtned,
and be ye valiant : For your Master Saul is
dead ; and also the House of Judah have
anoointed me King over them.*

THE *Philistines* having defeated *Saul's* Army,
and found the Bodies of Him, and his Three
Sons, amongst the Slain, stripped them, and used
them ignominiously, cut off their Heads, erected
Trophies of their Armour, in their Idols Temple,
and fastned their Bodies to the Walls of *Bethshan*.

Y 3

The

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The Sense of this huge Dishonour, touch'd to the Quick the brave and faithful Subjects of *Jabesh-Gilead*. *And all the valiant ones arose, and went all Night, and took the Bodies from the Walls, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their Bones, and buried them under a Tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven Days.* When David was come up to *Hebron*, after *Saul's* Death, in order to be crown'd King, as God had promised him, somebody told him what the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead* had done, and that it was they who had buried *Saul*: With purpose, perhaps, of exciting Him to Jealousy and some Displeasure, against those, who, at the Peril of their Lives, had done their last and greatest Honours to the Person and Memory of their dead Prince, and to his Family, who was accounted *David's* greatest Enemy, and who indeed had used him very ill: Or (if these Arts are Strangers at the Courts of new Princes) perhaps with good Design of letting *David* see, how much it was worth his while to court the Service of Men, so brave and faithful to their Lord both Living and Dead. With whatever Mind this Intimation was given, 'tis plain, that *David* took it right, and as became a generous and noble Prince. *He sent Messengers to the Men of Jabesh-Gilead, and said unto them, Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this Kindness unto your Lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him: And now the Lord shew Kindness and Truth unto you: And I also will requite you this Kindness, because ye have done this Thing.* There is nothing envious, nothing suspicious, in a truly great Mind. *David*, who knew the Obligation *Saul* had laid the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead* under, could not but be pleas'd to find the kind and dutiful Return they had made to him. That Prince had saved them when they were

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were reduced to the greatest Straits imaginable by the *Ammonites*; when even their voluntary Submission to Servitude, would not be accepted, nor made the Foundation of a Covenant, unless they might thrust out all the right Eyes of the Men of *Jabesh Gilead*, and lay it for a Reproach to all *Israel*. In this amazing Strait, *Saul*, with an unexampled Zeal and Expedition, comes upon the *Ammonites*, destroys them quite, and saves the Men of *Jabesh Gilead*. This great good Turn was never certainly forgotten: But best remember'd now, in the great Extremity to which that Prince was reduc'd, and in which he was lost. And this it was that pleased *David* so well, to see a People so grateful to their Prince, who had saved them from Reproach, and Bondage, and great Misery, by an Action that might have been misconstrued by a Successor less generous than *David*, and at a Time when nothing but true Gratitude, and a right Sense of Honour, could have inspired them with such an Undertaking, for the King they serv'd was now dead. A Prince that would be well serv'd, must needs like those who serv'd their Prince well; and they who love Gratitude in others, know how to be grateful themselves. What could the Men of *Jabesh Gilead* propose, but doing as became Men of great Honour, when he, for whom they expos'd themselves, was past rewarding and remembering all their Service? But they remembred, lov'd, and honour'd their *Deliverer*. One may compliment a dead Prince, when it will please the living one, with Interest, and Design, and Hopes of finding his Account in it. But *David* was to be the Successor, by God's Appointment, a Man that was maligned and pursued by *Saul* to Outrage; and therefore they could look for no Encouragement from thence for all the Kindness they should shew to *Saul*, according to all Appearance: They could not therefore design to flatter, by

this their noble Enterprize. Nothing but Gratitude and Honour could excite them to it; and those are Principles that will make Men act most worthily of themselves, and say and do what should be said and done, in spite of all Discouragements, and all the poor Precautions that Fear and Selfishness suggest. But they had to do, it seems, with a Prince of the finest Make and Temper possible, and of a Heart as truly generous, as themselves were brave and grateful to their Master. He gave their Action its right Turn, and fell to blessing it, and praising it, and promising to requite it himself, when there should be occasion. *Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this Kindness to your Lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him, i. e. done all that Men could do, to testify the grateful Sense you had of your Deliverance by him: Redeem'd him from the insulting Enemies, and paid him all the Honours that you could, and saved the Nation from the Reproach of having neglected their dead Prince. And now the Lord shew Kindness and Truth unto you.* God shall himself return these Honours on your Head, and heap his Blessings on a thankful People; he hates Ingratitude, of all ill Qualities; it is the Parent of Forgetfulness, and all Offence against himself; and he exclaims with greater Earnestness against his People for nothing more, than for *forgetting God their Saviour, and the wonderful Works that he had done for them.* Now 'tis the same ignoble, inconsiderate Spirit, that makes Men so soon unmindful of their heavenly and their Earthly Benefactors; and therefore David thinks, that God is pleas'd with People of Gratitude and Honour, and prays him to shew Kindness and Truth to them. Nor is it below the Dignity of inspired History, to record with Blame and Blemish the Ingratitude of *Israel* to the House of *Gideon*. It is said in the Book of *Judges* viii. 34. That

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That the Children of Israel remembred not the Lord their God, who had delivered them out of the Hands of all their Enemies on every Side; neither shewed they Kindness to the House of Gideon, according to all the Goodness which he had shewed unto them. No wonder if they who can forget God, should also forget his Instruments, by whom he works Deliverances, and when they have receiv'd the Benefits, should slight the Hand that reach'd them out: But this a little by the way. David does not only pray to God to shew Kindness to those grateful Subjects, but assures them he himself will never forget them.---- And I, says he, will also requite you this Kindness, because ye have done this thing. I, who am, by God's Appointment, to succeed your Master, will take all care to encourage and reward such honourable Service, and will remember those, who in Regard to the Religion of their Country, and the Honour of their Prince, have done brave and becoming Actions. This Proceeding of David, is indeed so reasonable and just, so wise and prudent, that it would not appear so great and generous, if we did not more regard the Passions and Affections of private Men, and the Intrigues of Court, and what is *ordinarily* done, than what is fit to be done. Taking therefore Mankind as we find it, David did not only act *wisely*, but nobly upon this Occasion, in commending and encouraging the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*, for the Kindness they had shewed to *Saul*, the grateful Sense they had of his delivering them heretofore, their fetching off his dead Body from the insulting Victors, and taking away the Reproach of *Israel*. Who shall go out the second Time, and fight the Battels of that State, that shews itself unthankful to its first Deliverer? It is an unaccountable Proceeding, that of the *Grecian Commonwealths* of old, to banish and disgrace their *Generals*, after great

great and extraordinary Performances, and saving of their States from utter Ruin. The Fear of their aspiring afterwards to Government, is not a Basis for that Building. That Maxim in particular, *That they who are able to support a sinking State, are able also to confound and overthrow it*, is a pernicious one, and false, and hatch'd in a villanous and most ungrateful Court; for it is not always so; and where 'tis true, that Men are able, yet there they are not always inclin'd to do it; and if it sometimes happen, that both Will and Power agree together, yet it is better venturing that sometimes, than always to discourage Gallantry and Virtue. To be subject to the Insults of open Enemies, is worse than fearing a suspected Friend. Is it nothing for a Prince to venture all he has, and Life itself for the Preservation of your Peace and Welfare? And if that Prince should have his private Aims, and might be push'd on by Ambition, Love of Glory, and Desire of Fame, or of enlarging Empire and Dominion; putting the worst, (which may be all Surmise) yet still the Evils and the Dangers he delivers People from, and all the Benefits acquir'd by Victory, and Success, and consequential Peace, do very well deserve to be rewarded with Love, and Praise, and Admiration; and whatever else is suitable for them to pay, or him to receive. There are such Charms in brave Performances, and gallant Actions, that they do not only tie and bind those who are benefited and advantaged by them, but conquer Strangers, and the unconcern'd, and oft extort due Praise and Admiration from their very Enemies, and make them love the Wisdom and the Valour that sometimes subdues them. Let any one in reading Histories, tho' never so remote in Time, and unconcern'd in Interest, see and observe, if his Heart do not unaccountably fide, and go along with brave and noble Leaders; if he does not rejoice in
their

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their Success, and fall again with their Misfortunes; if he is not moved with generous Indignation, to find a Prince or People partially unkind to *brave Captains*, and most unthankfully neglecting past Deliverances; if he does not secretly wish that State and Commonwealth may come again to need, and to implore that Help they had ungratefully forgotten, or not sufficiently esteem'd and recompenc'd. Which shews how natural it is to love and honour the Defenders of their Country, Life, and Laws and Liberties; and how uncomely, thankless and ungrateful Usage to them, shews in other People. But there was nothing of this in *David's* Disposition, or that of the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*: The one knew how to praise and to reward the grateful and the honourable Acts, which the other knew how to perform. *I also will requite the Kindness you have shewn to Saul.* There is something so very good in the Character of *David*, with respect to *Saul* his Predecessor, that it distinguishes him very much. What he here says to the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*, is exceedingly handsome and becoming him; but the Concern he shewed at his End, was more disinterested yet, and the Lamentation that he made over him and *Jonathan*, is tender above all Expression; and shews how little he maligned that Prince's Honours, when he himself, in the most noble, moving Manner possible, excites the People to express their just Esteem and Honour of their dead King, by all the Praises and the Sorrows they could utter. These things, indeed, are not in the Words of the Text; but they go before, and belong to them; and they are the Preface to that Purpose which *David* opens in the Text. Therefore now, (says he) *let your Hands be strengthned, and be ye valiant, for your Master Saul is dead; and also the House of Judah have anointed me King over them.* From whence it appears, that his

his Design was to gain the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead* to him; *Let your Hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant*; be not dismay'd at your great Loss, continue still to love and serve your Country, and look to find one that will honour and reward such dutiful and faithful People. Whilst *Saul* was living, I asked not your Service: But *now your Master Saul is dead, and now the House of Judah have anointed me King over them*: These are the Reasons he uses to engage them in his Interests ---- Their former King was dead, and *Judah* had chosen him, or rather anointed him, whom God had chosen, King. What an Encouragement is here to good and brave People! The King himself commends and blesses them for what was past, and courts their future Service. Happy those Days, when honourable and faithful Service perform'd to their Country, and dead Prince, recommended Men to the Love and Favour of his Successor! When they were not considered or neglected for the *Party* they had chosen, but for the *Good* that they had done, and for the Duty they had honestly discharged! This was reasonable, this was wise; but this, because unusual, was accounted brave and noble. No Prince but stands in need of good and faithful Subjects, and without them, stands but single: And noble and virtuous Actions do not only recommend, but make Men necessary. To side with Party, and to serve a Turn, does but increase a Faction; but to consult and to promote the general Interest of one's Country, is the true lasting Merit, and will gain *Honour*, tho' it may not Offices; but in a virtuous Reign, it will do both. When *David* is the Prince, he banishes all little Jealousies, and poor Suspicions, looks out for Merit, and the Men of Courage, Honour, and true Virtue, and cares not tho' he find them in the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*, who had adhered to *Saul* with an unshaken Firmness, tho'

Saul

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Saul and David were as opposite as could be, in the Peoples Opinion. To them he makes particular and condescending Application, and bids them be of good Courage, and hope to find in him, one that could well distinguish Merit, and reward it. *For now your Master Saul is dead.* This was not to reproach their Service and Adhesion to that Prince, nor to insult them on that Loss: But to remind them, that He, to whom they owed, and to whom they had paid the greatest and most honourable Service, was now dead. If *Master* signifies here any more than *King*, it is, to be sure, to their Advantage, that *Saul* is now called their *Master*, to intimate, that their Affection and Behaviour to him, was such as was peculiar to that Relation; as if their Love and Duty had been somewhat personal, and less indefinite than that which Subjects pay their Princes; which differs much, we know, from that which Servants pay their Masters. It is as if he had said, You have discharged the Duty of Subjects, with the Love and Diligence of menial Servants, and those of the Household; but now your King and Master is dead; and as he can require, so he is capable of receiving, no farther Service at your Hands. You have redeem'd his Fame and rescued his dead Body, with the same Zeal and Pains with which you served him living; preserve those good and faithful Principles, and transfer the Expressions of them to Him, to whom your Allegiance is now due, upon your Master's Death. ----- *For now also, the House of Judah have anointed me King over them.* The Tribe of *Judah* was the only Tribe that unanimously adhered to the Choice that God had made of *David*, to rule his People; no question but a great many, of the other Tribes, did also concur with them, *i. e.* particular People among them; but no Tribe in general

neral saw so fully into the Purpose and Appointment of God to make him King. The Fame of God's Designation, and his being anointed King by *Samuel*, the standing Prophet of the Times, and the Persecutions he underwent from *Saul*, upon this Head, must needs have made it notorious through all that small Country, that *David* was to succeed *Saul*, when it should please God to open the Way, by Death, to that great Honour. But the Generality of the Tribes did not plainly understand this Business, but still adhered to the House of *Saul*, and thought of fixing the Crown to his Posterity; which is the Reason of *David's* thus applying himself to the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*, and I suppose to other People in the like Manner. And to induce them to assent, he assures them that the Tribe of *Judah*, the Chief and the Royal Tribe, from whence the King *Messiah* should proceed, had already complied with God's Purpose, and anointed him King over them: Whose Example, he hopes, the rest will follow, to prevent those dreadful Consequences, that always follow Civil Wars and States divided.

This is the History. And the Application of these Particulars will be very proper in some respects; in others not at all. And *First, our Master Saul is dead. How are the Mighty fallen! And the Weapons of War perished!* Friendship and Honour help'd (I see) to compose that fine exalted Elegy, its noble Strains are mostly owing to the unexampled Love that knit the Souls of *Jonathan* and *David*, in Bonds, that even in Death were not to be divided. Whereas *our Matter*, would in Truth and Justice, sooner oppress, than fail, the Man that should attempt a Lamentation, There is indeed no great Resemblance betwixt these two Princes,

nor is there any need of raising the Value of the one, at the Expence of the other. 'Tis enough to the Purpose in hand, to remember, that what the *King of Israel* was to *Jabesh-Gilead*, that was the dead King to all these *Nations*, and in consequence to others also, namely their great *Deliverer* and *Defender*. Must not the Terms of our Submission and our Life have been, to have been Slaves, and to have offered up our Reason, and Understanding, to the great Reproach of human Nature? And how much less is that, than having *our Right Eyes thrust out*? Religion and our Liberty were the Conditions of the Covenant that was to be betwixt us; not that *we* offered them, but that nothing less would make our Peace, or serve our Adversaries Turn. And I am always glad to think those two Conditions go together, and that they who would be our *Lords*, will not accept of one without the other. From these hard Terms, the King did, *at the Kingdom's Call*, deliver us: And if we have not equally esteem'd this Blessing, with the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*, if we have not received it with equal Gratitude, we know who 'tis breaks off the Parallel, and where the Dishonour lies: We shall be found unworthy of the like Protection, tho', if it please God so to punish us, we may fall again into the like Hazard. Nor is it yet too late, to make Enquiries of this Nature. For tho' He is now no more capable, or sensible of any grateful Honours that may fall upon his Person; yet, for our own Sake, we should glorify his noble Acts, and should pursue his Memory, with all the Praise and Gratitude that it deserves; to satisfy the World abroad, how much we value our Religion and our Liberties, and how closely we will abide by them, by shewing how we valued, lov'd and honoured him, living and dead,
whom

whom we esteemed the great Preserver of them both. It should not, methinks, be said, that all the World besides, should know how to prize his Life better, than we who had the Use of it. Can all the World besides, admire that Probity, that Justice and unblemish'd Honour, that adorn'd his Life, and we alone be insensible, who reap'd the Fruits of them? I challenge all our Histories, to produce a Prince, in all Respects, his Equal: I call the differing Humours, Interests, and Affections and Religions of the Rulers of the World to witness, whether they ever found a Man to centre in, like him. With whom they could so unsuspiciously concert their Measures, so safely trust their Interests, and on whose Honour they depended so entirely. Could all this Confidence be built, but on the Experience of his great Discernment, his mighty Knowledge how to balance Powers, and most disinterested Integrity, and Virtue? Where are the Bargains that he ever struck for his particular Advantage? What Selfishness has yet appear'd in all his Conduct, for more than Thirty Years? He might have rais'd his Seat upon his Native Country's Liberties; his very Enemies would have supported him in those Pretences; but he affected no Honours but what were freely offer'd him, there or elsewhere: And if the Hands that reach'd them, would have pull'd them back, his Ambition, that was only useful, knew how to wear, as well as to deserve them. Can these, and other his great Qualities, (a few of which serve to ennoble other Princes) immortalize his Name abroad, make him the Standard of true Honour, and all Royal Virtues, and we at home think meanly of them? No Infamy, I think, could fall upon our Country, equal to this Ingratitude, and Blindness; nor more discourage brave Attempts, either abroad or at home, in our Defence, than to
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forget, or slight, such Virtue. I would not seem to preface Things so dishonourable, and unworthy of a sensible and brave People; if all Nations did not abound with poor and impotent, with dark, malicious, and malignant Spirits, that feed upon Detraction, Calumny, and Lyes, and are set on fire of Hell; and our own, as much as others, if not discountenanced by Men of Wisdom, Virtue and Authority. I will end this Head, when I have wish'd, that neither we at home, nor our Allies abroad, may ever feel this Loss fit heavier on us, than it does at present.

Secondly,—— Since our Master Saul is dead—— We must encourage one another, as *David* did the Men of *Jabesh-Gilead*. —— *Let your Hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant.* These Words do literally apply themselves to Soldiers, who are Men of their Hands; but they are also proper enough to all People, and bid them take good Heart, forget their Losses, and resume their Wisdom and their Courage, and be as useful in their several Places as they can: Do, what they did for *Saul*, to *David*; exert their utmost Powers in the Defence of their Religion, and their Country; and more (if that may be) since more does now seem necessary. Our Loss is but too great already, and we our selves shall make it greater much, if, with the King, we also lose our Hope and Confidence. This Blow will strike us as deep, as even our Enemies believe and wish, even to the Heart, if it do not excite us to Steadiness and Unanimity in all our Counsels and Proceedings. What a Reverse of Fortune would that be! If this amazing Loss would heal our Differences, confound our Factions, and reconcile us to one another! I know of nothing that could make amends for it, but such an Issue. And such a Loss is, sure, as

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strong a Necessity to bring such Union on, as any thing we can imagine ; for how can we unite abroad, if we divide at home? And how can we supply that Loss, without a perfect Agreement both with our Friends and one another? But whither are we driven, to look for so fair a Day, from a Cloud that darkens almost all the Country? Well may we wish for such a Time, but who can expect his Death should produce such good Effects, when all the Care and Influence of his Life could contribute but just enough to keep us quiet? Let us, however, make the best of it, and believe we cannot *quarrel* now with such Security. Let us stay 'till we have better Leisure to disagree, and do one another Mischief. Let us first unite against our *Common Enemy*, and when that Matter is dispatch'd, resume our former Differences, remembering carefully where we left off. *Lastly*, Our Hands must needs be strengthened, and we must be valiant, because *we also have anointed David King over us*. We have a Princess on the Throne, who both deserves and wants all the Duty and Affection that Subjects can pay to Her, and under whom, if we be peaceable, unanimous, and obedient, we may, by the Blessing of God, live very happily. One Female Reign, as it was so long, so was it the most glorious to this Nation, that we almost ever had. And had it pleased God to have spared *another Life*, there was nothing great and good, but what we might well have hoped for from it. Nor is our present Queen nearer allied to her in Blood, than in sincere Religion, Virtue, Purity of Life, and all good Qualities, that can adorn a private Person, or fit her for the Throne. Let us remember She is *all* that God hath spared us, of our Native Princes, of *English* Heart, and *Protestant* Religion, and treat Her with that

tender Duty, and Fidelity, that is requisite to make a Sovereign easy, and a People happy. She will be exercis'd with Cares enough, 'tis probable, from Difficulties abroad, and therefore all good Subjects will be careful of disturbing and perplexing her Affairs at home. 'Tis a wrong Turn that People give to Exhortations of Obedience, Duty, and Fidelity to Princes, when they conceit they only tend to advance the Glory and Advantage of the *Governours*; it is the *Peoples* Peace, and Happiness, and Plenty and Security, that is intended most by such Discourses; and which are best provided for, and best assured, by being quiet, good and dutiful obedient Subjects. Is it not so, in all Relations else, as well as this? Are not those Children happiest, who observe their Parents best, with most obsequious Love, and dutiful Obedience? Do not those Servants live the easiest, who live in constant Order, and under the Directions of reasonable and prudent Masters? Is not the Discharge of every Duty the Way to Praise, and Quiet, and Security? Is it not therefore every one's Advantage, to live in Order and Subjection? Must not these Duties now and then be pressed, because they have been sometimes handled undiscreeetly? To flatter Princes with a Power that belongs not to them, is but to ensnare them to their Ruin, in the Experiment; and to set Subjects loose from their Obedience to the Laws, is to destroy them by their Liberty. There is no such thing as Peace or Safety to be had, but in due Subordination of Powers, and paying each the Obedience and Submission that is lawfully required of them. We can no more be happy without Obedience to our *Governours*, than we can live without our daily Food. And we have now Occasion, more than ever, to shew our selves good Subjects. The Eyes of all the

World will be fix'd upon us, to observe how we behave our selves on this Occasion; our *Friends*, to see if we be worth their Friendship; our *Enemies*, to find our feeble Part, and make their Advantage of us. We must therefore shew them both, that we are much at Unity with one another, that we centre all in dutiful Obedience to our Queen, and that our Parties only now contend, who shall deserve her favourable Regards the best, by their Affection and Fidelity to her Person and Government, by Virtue, and true Merit, and serving honestly their Country. These Things will give new Life and Hopes to the one, and Rage, and Disappointment, and Despair to the other. They have long said, with *Esau*, in their Hearts, *The Days of Mourning for my Father are at hand, and then will I slay Jacob*. Let us shew them, that they built more Hopes on that disastrous Day, than were reasonable; that tho' it were a much lamented Day, yet that it rob'd us not of all our Courage and Resolution; that it gave us Grief more than enough, but did not leave us destitute, nor make us careless of our Safety: And that we will not increase our Loss, by giving them any Advantage, by shewing any Weakness or Distraction. In a Word, we must each of us do, within our private Sphere, all that becomes true *Englishmen*, that love the Liberties and Honour of their Country, and all that becomes the Professors of the Reformed Religion, in Opposition to that great Corruption of Christianity, *Papery*; to the securing our selves at home, to the animating our Friends abroad, and to the defeating the inextinguishable Malice of our Enemies. And to the doing this, let us be sure to call in God into our Party, make him our Friend, our Patron and Protector, in which the Way lies always open, by living in his Fear, by walking holily before him, by being honest, sober,

virtuous

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virtuous Christians. 'Tis not a Prophet, nor a King, but the Lord of Hosts, that is indeed *the Chariots and the Horsemen of Israel*. It is to Him we must betake our selves, in whose Favour only there is Life, and who would be our surest Refuge in the Day of Trouble: 'Tis he alone, who can supply those mighty Losses he of late hath multiplied upon our Heads. We placed perhaps too high a Confidence in Arms of Flesh. Never was Life, indeed, so made to trust in, and deceive a People, as this last, of which we are bereaved! What could we not have look'd for from it? And how much Earnest did it give us, of Security, of Victory and Success, of Peace, and Happiness, and Settlement! And how are all these Expectations vanish'd in a Moment! These Things must teach us to depend on Help, that never yet has fail'd those who would ask it, and deserve it. Let us therefore (to make an End) intreat of Him, who is the eternal Source of all true Comforts, that we may, with Truth and Reason, address to him in the Words of the 44th Psalm, Verse 5. *Thou art our King, O God, send help unto Jacob; through thee will we overthrow our Enemies, and in thy Name will we tread them under, that rise up against us; for we will not trust in our Bow, it is not our Sword that shall help us: But it is thou that savest us from our Enemies; and puttest them to Confusion that hate us: We make our boast of God all Day long, and will praise thy Name for ever.*

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S E R M O N X V I.

O N T H E

Queen's Accession to the Throne.

Preach'd at

St. *Austin's*, in 1703.

2 C H R O N. Chap. IX. Verse 8.

Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in Thee to set Thee on his Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God. Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he Thee King over them, to do Judgment and Justice.

WHEN the Queen of *Sheba* had proved the Wisdom of *Solomon*, and seen the State and the Magnificence in which he lived, with the fine Order and Oeconomy of all his Household, *there was no more Spirit in her*, she fell, as it were, into an Ecstasy of Admiration, and blesses God, the
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King,

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King, his Servants, and his People, who were so happy in each other. *Blessed be the Lord thy God, who delighted in Thee, to set thee on his Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God: Then for the People. ---Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made He Thee King over them, to do Judgment and Justice.*

In which Words we have to consider, *First*, The Goodness of God to *Solomon*, in setting Him on the Throne of his Father *David*. *Secondly*, The Blessing God intended for his People, in giving them so wise and worthy a Prince as *Solomon*. *Thirdly*, The End for which God placed Him on the Throne, *to do Judgment and Justice*, which was also the Means by which the People were design'd to be so happy under him.

First, Of the Goodness of God to *Solomon*, in setting him upon the Throne, *Blessed be the Lord thy God, who delighted in thee, to set thee on his Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God.* *Solomon* was not the eldest Son of *David*, but was prefer'd by the particular Favour and Appointment of God, before the rest, even before he was born, and was call'd, by his Command, *the Beloved of the Lord*, or one in whom the Lord delighted; and chosen to succeed his Father, and (because a Man of Peace) to build *the House of God*. His setting therefore on the Throne, (to the Disinheritance of his elder Brethren) was a peculiar Favour of God. But this Throne is also call'd *His Throne*, i. e. God's Throne, and he is said to be King *for the Lord his God*. The *Jews*, to the Days of *Samuel*, lived under a Theocracy, or the immediate Government of God. And the Queen might perhaps think it was so still, notwithstanding She saw they had a King: But it was

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was not so, for, by asking a King, though never so good, God tells *Samuel* 1. viii. 7. *They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* Yet still, because the People were God's People, in Covenant with him, and favoured by him, above all the Nations of the Earth, and because he still espoused their Cause, and they still observed the Laws and Statutes which he gave them by *Moses*, the Throne is call'd *His Throne*, and he is said to be King for the Lord his God; as also because he was chosen by God, like *Saul* and *David*, before him, to sit upon the Throne and judge his People. It was yet an Elective Kingdom with respect to God, (as all others are) but with respect to the People, it was, and was to be Hereditary, and the eldest Son was to succeed, as *Solomon* himself declares, when he had his Mother ask of him the Kingdom for *Adonijah*, for he was his elder Brother. So that the Favour of God was still the more signal in his Preference. These are then the Reasons why the Throne of *Israel* is called the *Lord's Throne*, and why *Solomon* is said to be King for the Lord his God. And if ever any one might more properly be called God's Vicegerent than another, it was *Solomon*: He was to reign over God's People, in God's Stead. Who can doubt, after this, but that he was to be the best King that ever reign'd? That he was to govern himself by the Rule of God's Word? And his People according to the Laws that God had given them, in all Particulars where those Laws were plain; and in all others where they were doubtful, with the greatest Reason, and with his Eye perpetually upon their truest Interest and Happiness? When a Man has said, that a King is God's Vicegerent, he has said, in Effect, what God himself said, by the Mouth of *David*, in his last dying Words, 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 2, 3.

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The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word was in my Tongue. ---The God of Israel said, ---The Rock of Israel spake to me. ---What was it, in the Name of Wonder, after all this Preparation? This ---He that ruleth over Men, must be just, ruling in the Fear of God. A Speech most worthy of the King of Israel! Most worthy of the King of Kings, even God himself! This it is to be God's Vicegerent, to be King for the Lord his God.

'Tis a pitiful and shameful Thing, that Men, either in Ignorance or Flattery, where-ever they meet with such noble Expressions of the Kingly Office, as, that *his Power is of God*, and, *The Ordinance of God*, and that *He is in God's stead*, and *His Vicegerent* and the like---should either give it a wrong Turn, by giving the Prince, from thence a lawless and unbounded Power, because that God's is so, or only enforce from thence, the Obedience and Subjection of the People, *without Reserve*: Never concerning themselves with shewing the indispensable Obligation which all those noble Expressions lay upon Princes, *to be just, and to rule in the Fear of God*, and, in all Things, to represent that great Original from whence they derive. *They have their Power from God*; no doubt of it; 'tis therefore only the Power of doing Good; for God himself has no other Power: They cannot then exceed their Principal: He can give them no other Power than what he is invested with himself: They can therefore have no Power from him, to do Injustice, Violence, Oppression, or any manner of Mischief. *They are in God's stead*; i. e. to do as God would have them do; as God himself would do, were he a King on Earth; and is not that the best in the World for Mankind? Say but *The Lord is King*---and every one will answer---*The Earth may be glad thereof, yea the Multitude of the Isles may be glad thereof.* For though *Clouds and Darknes*

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Darkness are round about him, yet Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Seat. We cannot always discern the Reason of his Dispensations, nor the Rules of his Providence and Government of the World, but knowing He is God, we know assuredly that he is always just and righteous. And a Prince cannot be *in God's stead*, unless he be also just and righteous. He cannot be *his Vicegerent*, but by representing him in those Perfections (according to his confined Abilities and Powers) with which he rules the World.

This is the truest Use of deriving Power from God, and of asserting Government to be the Ordinance of God. And this is the Honour, Privilege, and Advantage of Princes, that they are in God's Stead, his Substitutes and Vicegerents, to distribute Justice to Mankind, to keep their Nations in Peace and Order, to encourage and protect the virtuous and good People, to secure them from the Malice and Violence of wicked and ungovernable ones, and to punish such as stand out against these Ends of Government, that are so useful and so necessary to the Being of Society, and the Welfare of Mankind. This is their Glory, and their Happiness, that they are God's peculiar Instruments, by whom he showers down upon the World all the Benefits of good Government, Security from Violence abroad, and Injustice at home, and all the Advantages of Peace and Plenty, and Enjoyment of the Fruits of their honest Labours, and of the Blessing of God upon their Diligence. They have the mighty Pleasure of having continual Opportunities of doing Good, which is a great Blessing, and a signal Favour of God. And to make the Discharge of this great Trust, committed to them by God, more certain and assured, they are cloathed with the greatest Honours that People can pay them;
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they live in the greatest Affluence that Nature can provide, and Art improve; they have whatever Satisfaction can be had in the World; and all their People seem dispos'd to give it them, and set themselves to do whatever may be pleasing in their Sight. If there be any Happiness to be had in receiving or conferring Honours, in using or bestowing Riches, in making and rewarding Friendships: If any Pleasure in Meat, or Drink, or Ornament: In being singular, distinguish'd and supreme: If any Thing External can make Princes happy, their high Condition and Estate procures it them. So that they have great Reason to esteem themselves favoured of God, that are so charged with the Blessings of this World, above other People. All these Blessings are the natural Results and Consequences of the Power and Supereminence of their Station: But they are also to be considered as so many Encouragements to the discharging their great Trust, and so much Recompence for doing it. They are to do the greatest Good to their People, and their People are to return them, in lieu of it, all the Honour, Pleasure and Advantage, that they possibly can. There is therefore Reason enough, you see, for Kings to give God Thanks for setting them on the Throne; not only for selecting them, to be the happy Instruments of all the Good that he intends the World by Government, but also for all the natural Recompences of Honour, Pleasure, Riches and Advantages that attend their Dignity. The Queen of *Sheba* spoke with good Propriety and Reason, when she said---*Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on his Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God.*

II. Let us see, in the *Second Place*, to the Blessing that God intended to *his People*, by giving them

them so wise and worthy a Prince as *Solomon* then was. *Because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee King over them.* Because God loved *Solomon*, he made him King over his chosen People; and because God loved *Israel*, he made *Solomon* their King: The King must therefore be happy in his People, and the People must be happy in their King; or otherwise the Love of God, and the Blessing he intended to both of them, will be defeated. We must not judge of God's Love to either King or People, by the *Event*, but by the Purpose, by the Design of God in this Relation. They were intended to be, and they might be happy in each other; and whenever they are not so, there is a Fault on one Side. How will *Solomon* know, that the Lord delighted in him, when he set him on his Throne, but by finding it an easy Seat? By seeing his People pay him that Honour and Obedience, that is proper to make a King happy? And proper also to make themselves happy? And how will *Israel* know that their God loved them, to establish them for ever, in making *Solomon* their King, unless they find themselves happy and easy under his Government? The Purpose indeed of God is good, that they should each of them be happy; but that Purpose will never take Effect, unless each of them believe it is their Duty to contribute in their proper Place, to make the other happy, and make it their Business so to do: And whether each be happy or no, each will judge for themselves, by what they find and feel. The Prince will certainly judge whether he is happy in all the Instances of Honour and Obedience due from the People; and the People will feel whether they are happy in all the Effects and Fruits of a wise and righteous Administration. Can any thing be plainer than this, that *Solomon* will judge, whether God be to be blessed, for making

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him King over *Israel*, unless that *Israel* honour and obey him as they ought to do, and he find himself happy in them? And that *Israel* will judge, whether God loved them indeed, in making *Solomon* their King, unless they find their King pursue their true Interest and Happiness? 'Tis a vain Thing to tell either Prince or People, that they are happy in each other, if they themselves do not find that they are truly so. And after all the fine Discourses that may be made on either Side, there is nothing certain but this, that a Prince can never be happy in his People, without their Submission and Obedience to the **KNOWN LAWS**; nor a People happy in their Prince, unless he govern by those **KNOWN LAWS**. Shew us a Prince in all the World, that is happy, (as a Prince) where the Subjects are seditious, or at Liberty to break or despise the Known Laws: Or shew us a People happy, where the Prince is arbitrary, and bound to nothing, but governs by his Will and Pleasure.

I do not pretend to determine, that the People who are born in those unhappy Places where the Princes are most arbitrary, are not equally oblig'd to obey their Princes, with those who are born under the gentlest and most moderate Governments, to obey their Princes; but am inclin'd to think they must, till they can innocently mend their hard Condition. But every one can see *they are not happy*; they enjoy not the true Blessing of Government; they are not happy in their Prince, however happy their Prince may be in them; they are not the People the Queen here speaks of: That is not the Government that God intended to be such a Blessing; for that was apparently to bless them *both*, and bless them in each other. The King was to bless God for being King of such a People; and the People were to bless God for having such a King: This they could
never

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never do, unless they were happy in each other; the People must therefore be happy as well as the Prince, if they must bless God for him. In all good Governments, those Matters go together; and when a King and People are consider'd in their publick Capacities, and with Relation to one another, 'tis very hard to think how one should be happy without the other.

I confess, that most of the Kingdoms of the World make a sad Shift to divide these Interests; and provided the *Princes* be happy, all is well, and little or no Regard is had to the People. 'Tis enough for them, it seems, if *their Princes* be rich and powerful, able to take their Neighbour's Towns and Countries; and able to hinder other Princes from taking theirs; able to do a great deal of Mischief to other Princes Subjects, at the Expence of the Lives and Estates of their own; and able to protect their own People from the Violence of their Neighbours: And--- One can go no farther--- for they will not be able to protect them from their own arbitrary Violence, Oppressions, and Exactions. 'Tis Happiness enough they think, that they defend their Prey from other Lions, to devour it at their own Leisure themselves. This is, for ought I see, all the Happiness that most other Nations of the World enjoy; they are happy in having *Princes* rich and powerful, full of Honour and Magnificence, Empires of a large Extent, Castles and Forts impregnable, Armies innumerable, and Garrisons in every City. But if this be the Happiness of a People, 'tis surely such as is not to be envied: The Happiness of a People, must appear in the People, and be felt by the People. And it is not from the Splendor and Profusion of a Court, nor Glitterings of the Camp, nor the fine Habits of a numerous Guard, nor stately Edifices of a few great Men, and their luxurious
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Way of living: 'Tis not from these, that Strangers ought to form a Judgment of the Peoples Happiness; (for all these Things may be so much at the Peoples Expence, that they may be in Truth the more unhappy, for these so fine Appearances of Happiness) but from their *Ease*, their *Plenty*, and their *Liberty*: Then it is right, there is the happy Country, where both the Prince and People too are happy: Not in the airy and fantastick Notions of a Prince's *Glory* and *Renown*; but in his wise and righteous Government; his seasonable dispensing Justice and Mercy, his Care, Affection, and Encouragement of all his People. These are the Ways of establishing a People for ever; and these are the Ways of establishing the Throne also: And where they are both established, there is the Government that God intends to be a Blessing to a Nation. So that whether we treat of a Prince's being happy in his People, or of a People being happy in their Prince, the Means of making them so, is, in the *Third Place*, *The doing of Judgment and Justice*; which is also the End of God's placing *Solomon* on the Throne.

Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on his Throne, to be King for the Lord thy God! To what End?--- To do Judgment and Justice. God delights in no Man's Person, Quality, or Condition; but He delights in those who sustain their Character and Condition properly, *i. e.* who discharge wisely and well the Duties of the several Relations in which they stand engaged to one another, a good Servant and a good Master, a good Father and a good Son, a good Subject and a good Prince: And if he delighted to set *Solomon* on the Throne, it was in order to his sitting there most usefully: His Sceptre is a Sceptre of Righteousness; and if he put it into any Prince's Hands, it is to be still a Sceptre of Righteousness; and when it ceases

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to be so, how is it God's Sceptre? And so is his Throne, *Righteousness and Judgment are the Habitation of his Seat*: He will therefore place no one in his Throne, but whom he intends and commands to do *Judgment and Justice*. These Words are therefore to be added and supplied to that Part of the Text that refers to King Solomon, as surely in Reason, and Sense, and God's Purpose, as they are found in that which relates to the People---*Because that God loved Israel to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee King over them, to do Judgment and Justice*. God loved Israel, and would establish them for ever; the Means he pitch'd upon were, making Solomon their King. How would that do it? By his doing Judgment and Justice. That was the Way God took to establish his People, by giving them a Prince that would do Judgment and Justice.

Do what you can with this great *Eastern Compliment*, turn it which way you will, and nothing will be clear but this---That Judgment and Justice are the Things, in which both Prince and People are to be happy. The Prince, in the great Honour, Pleasure, and Rewards, that naturally, as well as by God's Blessing, accompany the doing so much Good to Mankind: And the People, in the Security and great Advantages they reap from a Righteous Administration of Justice. And, indeed, whoever says that Government is of God, and that the Powers are ordain'd of God, must say that both the Governors and governed are intended to be blessed thereby; for God intends nothing but Good to Mankind. Natural Reason says so, by the Mouth of this great Princess: And God himself says so (as we have seen) by the Mouth of King David; *He that ruleth over Men must be just, ruling in the Fear of God*. He must not only see Justice done betwixt

Man and Man, and hinder one Subject from injuring and oppressing another (for this the greatest Tyrants in the World do, for their own sake, and to keep themselves upon their Thrones) but he is also obliged to be himself just, and not to injure and oppress his People; he must rule in the Fear of God: that can never be, unless he be himself afraid of doing Injustice. That is the Difference betwixt an *Arbitrary Prince*, and one that governs by *Known Laws*: They both of them intend to secure their Subjects from the Violence and Wrongs of one another; and their publick Courts of Justice are equally beneficial to their People: But the Arbitrary Prince does what he pleases with his Subjects Lives, Estates, and Liberties; whereas the Prince who governs by Known Laws, knows he can no more injure his Subjects, than he can suffer one Subject to injure another. He rules in Justice and the Fear of God, and is therefore restrain'd himself from doing Evil. And unless the doing Judgment and Justice oblige the Prince himself, the People can, at best, be but half secure, and half happy; secure from one another, but not from Him who is the ablest to injure and oppress them; which, I say again, does not answer the End of God's appointing Government: His Ordinance is perfect, and therefore secures from all Injustice whatsoever.

I do not here meddle with what Human Restraints Princes of different Countries may be laid under, from doing Violence and great Injustices, or who shall take Account of that; I am only concern'd to say, That, according to the Rules of Reason and God's Word, the Princes of the Earth are as much restrain'd themselves from doing Injustice, as they are bound to see it done betwixt Man and Man: And that without it, what *David* said would signify little, and the Queen of *Sheba's* Compliment be very imperfect;

perfect; for the making *Solomon* King could not be a Token of God's loving *Israel*, if the King were not obliged to do Judgment and Justice to them.

The New Testament says the same thing with the Old: And the 13th Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, is the Place where Princes are to learn the End of their Institution, and the Reason of their Authority, as well as the People to learn the Duty of Submission, and the Reason and Use of their Obedience. *The Powers that be, are ordain'd of God*, then no body doubts it is for good Ends. *Rulers are not a Terror to good Works*, i. e. they are not intended to be so by God's Ordinance: The Virtuous and the Innocent have therefore nothing to fear from Rulers. *Wilt thou then not be afraid of the Power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have Praise of the same; for he is the Minister of God to thee for good. But if thou doest that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain; for he is the Minister of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil.* The short of which is, that the Magistrate is God's Minister to punish wicked People, and to encourage and protect the innocent, the virtuous, and obedient Subject. This is the End of Government, this is of God, and all of it good; and every body sees how useful an Ordinance it is, having no other Aim, no Eye to any thing besides the Welfare of the Subject; which is also the very Reason of the Submission and Obedience of the Subject. 'Tis altogether for their Profit: There can be no such thing as Judgment and Justice administred, without the Obedience of the People. If the lawful Magistrate, in the Execution of Laws, may be disobey'd, then is Government at an End, and all the Uses of it lost, which unavoidably turns to the Destruction of the People. For, *Governors (as St. Peter says) are sent by God, and*

therefore are to be submitted to, because they are sent by him, *For the Punishment of evil Doers, and for the Praise of them that do well*; and therefore without Subjection and Obedience, the Wicked would escape Punishment, and the Good would be discouraged, which would destroy the End of Government.

There is not indeed a Word, in all the Scriptures, relating to Government, but what agrees with the Compliment which the Queen of *Sheba* here makes to *Solomon*; that the Favour God designs to a *Prince*, when he sets him on the Throne, is the giving him the Abilities and Opportunities of doing the greatest Good to Mankind, by doing Justice and Judgment, which naturally rewards him here with Praise and everlasting Benedictions, with Honour and Pre-eminence, with Power and Wealth, and all the Advantages this World can give, as well as entitles him, through God's Goodness, to an Immortal Crown, and Everlasting Happiness hereafter: And that the Favour God designs to a *People*, by giving them a good King, is only seen in the Effects of a wise and righteous Government. This is what the *Queen of the South* came to observe, and what she thought she saw, in *Solomon's* Government, and for which she breaks out into Admiration and great Praise, and says in the Text, *Blessed be the Lord thy God*, blessed by thee for this thy People, and blessed by this People, for giving thee to be their King. There must therefore be Reasons on both Sides, to give to God this Blessing. And because this was the greatest Compliment the Queen of *Sheba* could pay to *Solomon*, for all the Honour, Satisfaction, and Royal Entertainment she receiv'd at his Hands, and after all the Observations she had made of his great Wealth and Splendor, the Wisdom of his Government, and the most beautiful and orderly Oeconomy of his Household

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Houſhold---Becauſe of this, I believed it would be very proper to the Occaſion of our coming here together on *this Day*, which is to celebrate the *Inauguration of the Queen*, and to give God Thanks, for ſetting Her upon the Throne of Her Anceſtors.

Bleſſed, therefore, be the Lord Her God, who delighted in Her, for ſerving him, from her earlieſt Infancy, with a moſt reaſonable and unaffected Piety, and with moſt exemplary Virtue, *and ſet Her on His Throne, to rule for the Lord Her God!* His Throne more properly, I hope, than any Throne this Day in all the World, not only for his *Chriſt's Religion* here profeſs'd, and here eſtabliſh'd on the right and ancient Bottom (ancient as Chriſtianity it ſelf firſt ſettled by the Apoſtles) but alſo for that happy Temperament of Government, by which the People live as eaſy as their Prince; which does as certainly pleaſe God, as he is certainly diſpleas'd with Tyranny, Vexation, and Oppreſſion of a People: And on this Throne may ſhe long rule *for the Lord her God*, long to promote his Glory, and the true Religion.

No Prince ſeems more diſpos'd to remember in whoſe Stead ſhe reigns, and whoſe Authority ſhe hath; attending wholly to his Service, and the Benefit of thoſe who are committed to her Charge: Affecting no ſuſpicious Power, nor uſing her acknowledg'd one, to any Purpoſes but the doing Judgment and Juſtice. So that if by our Submission and Obedience, which make a Throne a ſecure Seat, and by our Zeal and dutiful Affection, which make it an eaſy one, we make theſe firſt Words fit proper in her Mouth, and give her Cauſe *to bleſs the Lord her God*, for placing her on ſuch a Throne, to govern ſuch a People; we have all the Reaſon in the World to hope and promiſe our ſelves, that what follows will be alſo true, and proper for us, who are

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her People, to say, *Because our God loved us, to establish us for ever, therefore made he her our Queen over us, to do Judgment and Justice.*

The Queen of *Sheba* meant no Disrespect to *David* and his Reign, when she paid this Compliment to *Solomon* and his. *David* was a brave Prince, and valiantly fought the Lord's Battels, and gain'd Immortal Honours to himself, and to the Nation. But *David* died like other Men, and was gathered to his Fathers: And God still loved *Israel*, and raised them up another Prince, that should reign in his stead, and do, as he had done, *Judgment and Justice*: This was continuing on his Mercy to his People. And without the like Goodness shewed to this Nation, *This Day* would have furnished us with other Affections than those of Joy and Gratitude. For on this Day *we lost the King!* whose Life, before his Death, made way to that Accession to the Throne, from whence we have already reaped many Blessings and Advantages, and from whence we hope and promise our selves a thousand more.

The Custom of observing, with Solemnity, the Inauguration of our Princes, is of old, and was first discontinued (as I think) by that wicked Civil War, that confounded all Observances of Decency and Order both in Church and State, which made it hazardous to give God Thanks (some Years before he died) for placing King *Charles the First* upon the Throne; by setting up a Lower House of Tyrants, who did truly oppress the People, and overthrow their just Liberties more than any two Kings had done since *the Conquest*; and were never out-done by any but themselves, when Part of them became a Court of Justice, and put their King to Death. The Inauguration-Day was usually the Day on which the Predecessor died; but the Thirtieth of *January* having been noted with such an execrable Mark,

could

could not have been observed with any decent Joy, by any honest Subject. Such different Images would have crowded in upon the Mind, as must have occasion'd a Confusion, horrible and chocquing----- to have given God Thanks for setting the Son upon the Throne, the Hour his Father's Blood was shed by Villains! Therefore his *Birth-Day* was appointed for the Festival, that we might give God Thanks for the restoring our Ancient Government both in Church and State, without Remembrance of that *Day of Scandal*.

The next Reign set the Inauguration right; but that, I think, was all. It was a Day of great Sorrow, and little Comfort: It gave us certain Fears, and very uncertain Hopes: We had many Things to ask of God upon that Day, but it could not be a Day of much Thanksgiving. His peaceable and quiet Entry, and his becoming Resolutions and Professions at the first, surprized us indeed into some faint Hopes, and short-liv'd Joys; but in a little Time, that Day became more truly *Festival*, by being the *Birth-Day* of our present *Queen*, than for the Honour it was marked with by his Succession to the Throne.

The following Reign was honoured by no such solemn Observation; as well because there had been no *Decease*, as for the great Unsettlement and Hurry all Things, and all People were then in; not that there was not as much Reason to enjoin it, and as ready a Disposition to observe it, as at any other Time. For that Reign will be as memorable and welcome to Posterity, as any we have had, without such Mark to note it by: And heretofore, when People ask'd why such a Statue was *not crowned*, it was thought a greater Honour, than the asking why such a Statue *was*. Let but a Reign be memorable for true and solid Benefits design'd and done to a Nation, and it will eat out all the Teeth of Ma-

lice, and live in Praise, in Spite of all the Opposition of the World. *This Day* put an End to that *Great Life*, which all the World, of Friends and Enemies, knew how to value, except a few poor *English Wretches*. And it had been a Day of lasting Sorrow to all true Lovers of their Country and Religion, had not the Lord delighted in the Queen, to set her on his Throne; had He not loved our Land, to establish us for ever, by setting Her over us, to do Judgment and Justice. Her Qualities are truly such, and such Her Disposition to Piety and Virtue, that We, without a Subtilty, Distinction, or a secret Sense, can heartily give God Thanks for setting Her upon the Throne. We can not only *pray* to him, for such good Gifts and Graces as he sees are needful to the Discharge of her great Trust; but we can *praise* him, for what we see already in Her, and make This Day, a Day of true Thanksgiving.

* 1703. The *State* has tasted largely of her Bounty already; and the *Church* is * going to do the like also, by a most generous Christian Act of Goodness. So that if God shall give her Rest, and make her Reign a Reign of Peace, She will, with *Solomon*, build up the House of the Lord her God, which *David*, tho' he had it in his Heart, could never do, for the Wars that were every where round about him. So that if we be as well dispos'd our selves, by peaceable and dutiful Obedience to her, by Union and Agreement with each other, as She by doing Judgment and Justice, we may, by the Blessing of God, become a very happy People; and have great Cause to praise him for, and to rejoice in each other; and to pray him, that this Day may often return with Honour on her Head: And, that after a long and happy Reign, in wise and righteous Administration, She may receive a glorious Recompence at the Lord's Hands, and be Crown'd with everlasting Happiness in Heaven.



S E R M O N XVII.

N. B. This should have been the Second Sermon,
according to Order of Time.

Preach'd before the
RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
LORD-MAYOR
AND
Court of ALDERMEN
AT
St. MARY-LE-BOW,
ON

Friday the 11th of April, 1692.
Being the F A S T-D A Y.

2 S A M. X. 12.

*Be of good Courage, and let us play the Men for
our People, and for the Cities of our God: And
the Lord do that which seemeth him good.*

WHEN *Joab* had set his Army in Array
against the *Syrians*, and had given his Or-
ders to *Abishai* to do the like, with those under his
Com-

Command, against the *Ammonites*, and mutually engaged the Assistance of each other on occasion, in the 11th Verse; He prepares both himself, his Brother, and the Army for the Fight, with this short Speech in the Text, *Be of good Courage, &c.* In which Words we have these Three Things to consider: *First*, The Exhortation of the General, *Be of good Courage, and let us play the Men.* *Secondly*, The Occasion and Necessity there was of doing so; the Concern they had at Stake was very great; it was, *For their People, and for the Cities of their God.* *Thirdly*, The Resignation and Submission of the Issue and Event to God's good Pleasure and Disposal; *And the Lord do that which seemeth him good.* Of these I intend to speak in the first Place; and in the Second, make what Application may be proper. And,

First, Of the Exhortation; *Be of good Courage, and let us play the Men.* The Safety and Success of an Army, does in great measure depend upon the Concord and Agreement of Commanders, and the good Understanding there is betwixt them; and *Joab* prudently considering this, lest the unequal Division of the Bands should offend *Abishai*, [for whether the *Syrians* were indeed the better Soldiers, and more formidable Enemies; or whether the *Ammonites* were suppos'd by *Joab* to be weakned by their Guilt, (as a *Jew* might well surmise) being the Authors and Occasion of this War, by having villainously treated *David's* Ambassadors; and therefore, that the weakest Men of *Israel* would be a Match for *them*, or whatever was the occasion of *Joab's* taking all the chosen Men to serve under him] he makes his Agreement beforehand with him, to come and succour him, if he should find himself distress'd, and requires the like of him again. But
because

because the People bear too great a Share, either in Rout or Victory, to be overlook'd, he does, as wise and valiant Captains always us'd to do, address himself to the Army likewise, in the usual Words of Exhortation, *Be of good Courage, and let us play the Men.* *Be of good Courage*, said *Moses*, to the Men he sent out to explore the Land of *Canaan*, Numb. xiii. 20. *Be strong and of a good Courage*, said the same *Moses*, both to *Joshua* and the *Israelites*, when he was about to leave them, to encounter with their Enemies, Deut. xxxi. 6, 7. *Be strong and very courageous, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed*, said God himself to *Joshua*, entring upon his Command, Josh. i. 6, 7, 9. *Be strong and of good Courage*, said this *Joshua* too, to the *Israelites*, 10. 25. And so said *David* to his Son *Solomon*, 1 Chron. xxii. 13. Chap. xxviii. 20 And so said *Ezra* to the *Jews*, x. 4. Which does not only shew, that no Attempt of any Moment or Importance, of our own Contrivance or Design, can be hopefully undertaken by us, without the exerting thus our Strength and Courage to the utmost; but that it is also necessary so to do, even in Enterprizes begun by God's special Order and Command, and where the Undertakers were his peculiar Favourites, as is observable in all the above-mention'd Instances. There is nothing so sure, as that where the Heart is faint, the Hands are feeble and hang down; the one does strangely influence the other; Men are commonly strong or weak, according to their Courage, not their Nerves and Sinews; they are almost whatever they desire to be; and Power dwells near the Will, as well as near Necessity. Some by this Heart and Courage have atchieved such great and marvellous Things, as few but they who are alike inspired, and heated with their Fire, can easily fancy or believe, more than indeed themselves could at first propose; or in
their

their sober, cautious, reasoning Mood, could hope for. Others, for want of this, have lost their lucky Opportunities, and blasted many a fair and hopeful Enterprize, when every thing, besides themselves, conspir'd to crown them with Success and Honour. Many, whose Hearts have robb'd their Heads of their triumphant Wreathes, and loaden both themselves, and (which is more to be lamented) others, both with Chains and Infamy, that with a little of this generous Warmth, a little shaking off their Fear and Sluggishness, were fitt'd to be Conquerors, and happy. And therefore, there is great Necessity in all Attempts of Weight, of raising up the Heart, and calling all the vigorous active Spirits up to our Assistance; and not of this alone, but of provoking others with our Exhortations and Incitements, to *be of good Courage* also. There is a noble Emulation in the Souls of most, which oft lies dormant for a while, until it be awakened by Example, or Upbraiding, or Encouragement; till either Praise or Shame discover what they *can*, as well as what they *should* do. And this is most remarkable in War; where many times a quick Oration, or a brave Example of some one or few Particulars, has given such Life and Strength to the whole Army, that from a fearful and inglorious Flight, they have returned to Victory and Spoil, and bravely have defac'd and crost the Footsteps of their Shame: And on the the other hand, some have been quite intimidated into Rout and great Disorder, by the Despondency of some great Officers, and cowardous Example of their Fellows, whose Fear did perfectly infect their Neighbours. So that in all Attempts of Moment, it is not only necessary to quicken and animate *our selves*, and raise our Hearts as high as can be, but to give Life and Soul to *others* also, and to take what Care and Pains we can, that *They*, as well

well as *We*, may *Be of good Courage*. The other Part of the Exhortation is, *Let us play the Men*; which is but the same Thing, expressed in other Words. *Be strong and quit your selves like Men, and Fight*, said the *Philistines* to each other, 1 Sam. iv. 9. *Be strong therefore and shew thy self a Man*, said *David* dying, to his Son, 1 Kings ii. 2. And so saith St. Paul, in the Case of Spiritual Warfare, 1 Cor. xvi. 13. *Quit your selves like Men, and be strong*. Using the very Words by which the LXX. have translated the Exhortation in the Text, ἀνδρίζεσθε καὶ κραταιώσθε And where this History is again repeated, in 1 Chron. xix. 18. It is----- *Let us behave our selves valiantly*, instead of, *Let us play the Men*; the one importing and supposing the other. And this the Heathens understood of old, when they began their Exhortations to the Fight with ἄνδρες εἰσὶ φίλοι, and *Fite Viri*, &c. Do but remember you are *Men*, and act accordingly; imagining that they who would but think upon themselves, would never do a Thing unworthy of their Nature, and the noble Name by which they were called. They look'd upon the Name of *Man* as a Preservative, and powerful Charm against both Treachery and Cowardice; a perfect Contradiction to whatever is esteemed vile and infamous, and comprehending every Thing that is great, and brave, and honourable. But lest the Consideration of the Excellence and Dignity of Human Nature, should not of itself ballance the Love of Life and Fear of Death, the general and prevailing Passions of Men's Hearts; there are also added, in the *Second Place*, The Motives and Incitements to the shewing forth this Courage, some Reasons and Inducements, why they ought to quit themselves like Men; it was not for themselves alone they were to fight, but *For their People, and the Cities of their God*. By *People*, we are to understand all that were

were left behind at home, all the Relations and Dependants that they had, their Fathers, Mothers, Wives and Children, Friends and Servants; and all the Civil and Judicial Laws, the Ties and Bonds that make a People, and distinguish them each from the other; for all these are implied in the Word *People*; and when Men fight for *their People*, they virtually fight for all these, because that these are all in danger to be lost by being conquered. And by the *Cities of God*, we are to understand not only their particular Cities, but all the Villages and Country, and all their Estates and Habitations, all their Subsistence, and their Livelihood, because whoever masters the *Cities* of a Country, is presum'd to be Master of all besides; the one does naturally take in all the other; it must be so in Reason, and we see it is so by Experience. But because these *Cities* are also *Cities of God*, we may very well imagine their *Religion* also is included in those Terms: For whatever Grace and Favour God is said, in many Passages of Scripture, to shew to *Israel*, and *Jerusalem*, and *Sion*, to love her Buildings and her Towers, and to take delight in her Palaces, with the like, we may be sure it is for the sake of his Laws and Worship therein: *In fury is God known, and his Name is great in Israel; at Salem is his Tabernacle, and his Dwelling in Sion.* And this is the Foundation of his Love. *He sheweth his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Ordinances unto Israel: He hath not dealt so with any Nation, neither have the Heathen Knowledge of his Laws,* Psal. cxlvii. 19. Here was the Habitation of his House, and the Place where his Honour dwelt; and 'twas on this Account that it was called the *Holy City*, and the *Holy Place*; and it is in this respect (making Allowance for a greater Holiness and greater Favours) that the Church of Christ is called, *The City*
of

of the Lord, Isa. 60. 14. *Mount Zion and the City of our God*, in Heb. 12. 22. And the same in Revelations is said of Heaven it self, 3. 12. So that by *Cities of God*, we are not to understand only the Walls and Houses, but the Worship and Religion of those Places. And then *To be of good Courage and play the Men, for their People, and for the Cities of their God*, is neither more nor less, than to fight and do Valiantly for their Lives, and Laws, and Fortunes, and Religion; the same which the Ancients called Fighting, *pro Aris & Focis*. This Place would give me Opportunity of saying something in Defence of War in general, and in the Justification of each of these particular Occasions; but the Consideration of these Matters at large would lead me too far, and hold me too long; it may be more convenient to take the Matter, as it is in the Text, for granted, as *Joab* did undoubtedly, concluding the Defence of his Country and Religion a very justifiable Ground of War; especially if we remember withal, that this *Their behaving themselves valiantly for their People, and for the Cities of their God*, was, notwithstanding, an Offensive War on *Israel's* Side, invading *Ammon* for their vile, unmanly Usage of the King's Ambassadors. And if such insolent injurious Dealing with Ambassadors be (as it always was accounted by the World in general) a just Occasion for a War Offensive, we may conclude safely enough, That the Defence of Lives, and Laws, and Fortunes, and Religion, are each of them sufficient Warrant for the drawing of the Sword. And though in private Cases, the Principles of Christianity are very peaceable and tender, and regardful of Mens Welfare in this World as well as the other, and lay greater Restraint on Peoples Inclinations to Contention and Disturbance than any other Laws whatever,

and

and would perhaps, if heedfully attended and obeyed, prevent most Wars; yet where Men will not hearken to good Reason, nor the Christian Doctrines, where there is no Redress of Injuries to be expected from the Laws (as in National Affronts and Wrongs there cannot be) where the contending Parties will admit of no Arbitrator betwixt them, whose Sentence shall be Decisive, and from whom there shall be no Appeal; there certainly the Sword of War becomes necessary, there Christ hath left the Publick to consult its Welfare and Defence, and to pursue its Peace and Safety by such Methods as are Proper, Just, and Honourable. He hath left no Rule in these Extremities for the Publick to govern it self by, but neither hath he barr'd it such Defence as the common Reason of Mankind suggests in all such Cases. He hath not indeed *commanded* War, but neither hath he so *forbidden* it, as that it should not be both Just and Lawful, when it is absolutely necessary. And absolutely necessary to be sure it is, when either Lives, or Laws, or Fortunes, or Religion, are at Stake, and cannot otherwise be well preserv'd. What End and Purpose of Religion can be serv'd, by letting Fifty, Sixty, or an Hundred Thousand People be killed, for the enlarging such a one's Dominion, or for the Enriching so many Plunderers with the Booty? What Tendency has such a Slaughter to the promoting of either Piety or Virtue? And therefore to think that Christianity commands such Patience, Sufferance, or such Cowardice as this, is to think it not only a very weak Religion, but a Religion countenancing and encouraging Oppression, Insolence, and Violence, and Cruelty, and Blood; for this would naturally happen, through the Infidelity of such as are not Christians, and the Malice and Perverseness of such as are very bad ones. What Use would such a People as the *Tartars* are, make of such a Do-

ctrine,

ctrine, as the Unlawfulness of War among the Christians? One might justly say, that such a Doctrine would be the Occasion and Cause of all the Ravages and barbarous Devastations, of all the Rapes and Murthers such a People would commit. And to say that Christianity encourages to so much Evil, is to give it an abominable Character; and yet they say as much, who say that War is absolutely forbidden to Christians; for were it so indeed, both Infidels and wicked Christians would commit a Thousand greater Evils than they daily do, and how far Christianity would be chargeable with them, by such a natural Provocation and Encouragement, as that disarming Christians were, is not hard to determine. It is but a poor Defence to say, I did not kill *Caius*, nor provoke *Sempronius* to his Murther; but only took away his Sword and Weapons of Defence, and left him to the Fury of his Adversary, who only watch'd for such an Opportunity. The Case of private People's suffering Injuries without Retaliation, is much another Thing than this of publick War; tho' even in that, the Redress of Law is by no means absolutely forbidden; and the Permission of Redress by Law for private Injuries, is not so different from Permission of Redress by War, for publick Wrongs, as People commonly imagine; the Reasons differ not in *Kind*, but in *Degree*. And if Martyrdom itself, *i. e.* the suffering Death for the sake of Christ and of the Gospel, be not so commanded, but that it *may* and *is* to be avoided, where the Honour of God and of the Christian Name can be secur'd without it; we may be sure, the suffering Death, and other Evils, where neither God's Honour, nor the Truth of the Gospel, nor any End of Christianity is serv'd, is not commanded us, and consequently that War is not forbidden by the Christian Law. But leaving these Disputes, and taking

it for granted, that every one of these Occasions of War is just and lawful; the Text supposes that they are every one of them good Motives and Encouragements to Men to behave themselves valiantly in the Fight; *Let us be of good Courage, and let us play the Men, for our People, and for the Cities of our God*; which, as I tried to shew, implied our Lives and Laws, our Estates and our Religion.

That People's *Lives* are worth contending for, need not be proved, for every one's own is almost worth a War to *him*; but when the Lives of all his Civil and his Natural Relations too are equally concern'd, then not to venture bravely for them, is to prove his Life indeed was hardly worth the Living; a Life that well deserv'd to be cast away. And what can be said of Men who in such Extremities will tamely yield, but that they act at once the Fool and Madman, and die indeed for Fear of Death? There is little Hope, that the Preservation of the Laws and Liberties of a Nation should prevail with those, whom the Consideration of their own, and others Lives, cannot incite to Courage, and incline to behave themselves like Men; but however, this has all along been esteemed, of all brave People, a Consideration of the last Importance, and they have freely ventur'd the one, in behalf of the other, accounting Life itself a Burthen, when they lost the other. There is something in the Frame and Constitution of each Government, so fitted and peculiar to the Genius and the Tempers of a People, that it is not to be alter'd by violent Conspirators at home, nor by a Foreign Enemy, without the greatest Inconveniences, and the most fearful Consequences possible; and the Laws of each particular Nation consulting most especially the Benefit and Welfare of their own Subjects, it is no wonder if they are tenacious of this kind of Government, and of these
Laws,

Laws, and find it worth their while to resist unto Blood in their Defence and Maintenance. It is the Properness and the Fitness of these Laws to the Country and the Subject, that gives each People the Happiness they have; and since it is impossible for a Nation to be absolutely conquer'd, without breaking the Laws and Constitutions of its Government, and bringing others in, more beneficial to the Conqueror and his Country, and consequently prejudicial to the Conquer'd, there is nothing in this World that better deserves to be defended to the utmost of Men's Power, than the Continuance of their Laws and Government: And this the rather, because the overturning of the Laws, does also overthrow Men's Fortunes and Estates, without which Men would live but hardly and uncomfortably; and that's the least, and one of the most gentle Effects of being conquered by a ravaging and greedy Enemy; the being reduc'd to Misery, and the greatest Evils of Want and Slavery, is an inseparable Companion of being overcome; the Hope of Prey and Spoil is the Life and Soul of an Army, and the Fear of it should also prove as strong a Spur to Valour, to defend one's self against it. That Religion (*Lastly*) suffers constantly in War, is very certain; and as certain, that the Preservation of it, in its Purity and Truth, is as worthy an Employment of Men's Strength and Courage, as any other Cause whatever. *Cum loca capta sunt ab hostibus, omnia desinunt esse sacra*, was a Maxim of old. When once a Place is taken by the Enemy, there is no farther Difference made betwixt Things sacred and prophane. *Wars and Victories* (saith Tertullian, Apol. c. 25.) *are made up of Cities taken and overthrown, which cannot be, without offending the Gods; the Military Fury at the same time indifferently assaulting the City Walls and Temples; Slaughters involving Priests and Citizens,*

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without Distinction; and the Soldier, greedy of his Prey, no more regards Things sacred than prophane: So many Conquests, so many Sacrileges; so many Triumphs over Nations, so many Triumphs too over the Gods. And this was look'd upon so certain, that the Greeks esteem'd it as a Law and Rule, That whoever conquered the Country, conquered the Religion of it also; and they did accordingly surrender both together: And upon this account it was, that all the ancient Generals, in their Speeches to their Armies, constantly reminded them of their Religion, Gods, and Altars, left at home, as well as Wives and Children, which were sure to be the Prey and Plunder of their Conquerors; and thought at the same time, That if the Love and Fear, and the Regard they had to them, would not excite their utmost Courage, nothing else could do it. Whether it be lawful to carry War into another Country for the Vindication of God's Honour, which we think is injured and affronted by the barbarous or ridiculous Worship of that Country, and for the Propagation of the true Religion, is what may bear some short Dispute, perhaps; but the Conclusion will in all likelihood be, That it is not lawful, since God is his own best Avenger, and can vindicate his Honour, and promote his Truth, in Times, and Ways, and Methods, as he sees convenient, without the Help of Man; which he, in such Cases, requires not. But whether it be lawful to carry War into another Country, for the Defence and Preservation of the true Religion, which is otherwise in Danger and great Likelihood of being ruin'd and destroy'd at home, will bear no manner of Dispute; because if it be lawful to be defended at home, (as all Men must allow) it will be also just to be defended abroad; for the carrying the War into another Country, is only to avoid those Evils

we must otherwise necessarily endure, if we should suffer our Enemies to bring the War home to us : And this makes no Alteration of the Justice of the War at all ; for the Cause of that is still the same, whether we fight abroad, or defend our selves at home ; and Men chuse the one or the other, according to their Strength, and the Situation of their Country, and for a great many other natural or accidental Reasons. But whether it be lawful to carry War into another's Country, even an invasive War, in the Defence not only of the true Religion, but of the Professors of that true Religion, though another's Subjects, has born Dispute a great while. The Example of *Constantine* the Great's invading of *Licinius* for the Christians sake, the Subjects of *Licinius*, might (with the Approbation of the Christians at that Time) serve in some measure, one would think, to determine this Matter in the behalf of the Lawfulness of so doing. *Constantine* and *Licinius* had shared the Empire betwixt them, and were consequently independent each of them upon his Fellow ; each was *Augustus*, and each of them had made his Son *Cæsar* ; and the Subjects of these Princes owed no manner of Obedience, but to each their Master. The Emperors had each of them decreed at *Milan*, That the Christian Religion should be tolerated through the Empire ; but *Licinius* afterwards suffering himself to be persuaded otherwise, betook himself, by all the Arts and Methods he was Master of, to break this Edict ; and fearing the Zeal and Power of *Constantine*, was forc'd to practise secretly and cunningly at first the Overthrow of Christianity ; not appearing in the Thing himself, but acting by his Presidents and Governors, who made their Court to him by such Compliance with his cruel Purposes, well knowing they could recommend themselves no

Euseb. Eccl.
Hist. lib. X.
cap. 5.

way so effectually, as by fulfilling his *Desires*, without expecting his *Commands*: But in a little Time, this Modesty or Fear was overcome, (such zealous Superstition is impatient of Restraint) and he began to open his Designs with falling first upon the *Bishops*, (all Persecutions ever did the same; the very Heathens knew, as well as did the Christians, that the Church of Christ could never be undone without *their* Ruin; and therefore took the readiest way, by falling upon *them* at first;) next he dismiss'd the Christians from all Employments at Court, cashier'd them from the *Army*, and turn'd them out of *every* Office; then seiz'd on their *Estates*, and fell at last upon the *Clergy*, killing some Bishops for praying for *Constantine*. Thus he continued persecuting for some good Time, designing nothing less than the utter Subversion of Christia-

Eccl. Hist. cap.
8. 9. & de Vit.
Const. lib. 2.
cap. 2. &c.

nity; which *Eusebius* (who liv'd at the same Time) says, He had undoubtedly effected, had not God, the Protector of his People, prevented it, by raising up his Servant *Constantine*, and leading him as it were by the Hand to their Deliverance; who, after having exercis'd more Patience than was necessary with this brutal Prince, and all to no purpose, made ready at last to succour these distressed Sufferers, concluding it a holy and religious Thing to remove one Man, and save thereby a Multitude of People. In truth, *Eusebius* tells this Story in such manner, that one might reasonably think, the Christians of *Licinius's* Empire sent to *Constantine* for some Relief; and there are some Phrases that would incline one to guess so: But there is no occasion of going any farther than we are sure; and that is, That *Constantine* did certainly make the Sufferings of the Christians one of his Pretexts of War at this Time; and that the Expedition was so well

well liked, that many *Clergymen attended him as Chaplains; and he thought if ever he had need of Prayers, it was now, and took them accordingly with him very gladly. And, lastly, That the whole Church, as well the *Western* as the *Eastern* one, rejoiced exceedingly at the Deliverance God was pleased to work by him, and expressed it in all the Demonstrations possible of Love, and Gratitude, and Honour; and with one Accord submitted to him, as the great and glorious Instrument of God's Mercy and Goodness towards them, and fill'd the World with his Commendations: And of this mutual Satisfaction in each other, the great and many endearing Kindnesses and Compliments that pass between the Emperor and the Council of *Nice*, are so many ample Testimonies, tho' they were most of them *Licinius's* Subjects, and the Council was call'd but a Year after his Defeat, 325. This Approbation of the ancient Christians, of this Act of *Constantine*, might serve, I say, to shew that they esteemed it not only just and lawful, but honourable and religious, to carry War into another's Country for the Defence of the true Religion, and the Preservation of the Lives and Liberties of its Professors, which had been otherwise in danger of being quite lost: For the Victor neither made Pretence of propagating the true Religion, nor forcing People to forsake the false one by the Sword; but only of securing and defending them who were before Christians. And the whole Conduct of our Queen *Elizabeth*, (one of the best and happiest Princes that we ever had, and one who lov'd, and best consulted both the Honour and the Welfare of our Nation) her whole Conduct, I say, with respect to all the Protestants abroad, approv'd of and rewarded, both by Parliaments and Convocations, might make this Case a little more

* Valefius calls them Bishops.

defensible, than it is commonly held to be by a great many People. These Princes (and a great many others) did not only think themselves oblig'd to be of good Courage, and behave themselves valiantly, for their own People, and for the Cities of their God at home; but made the Cities of God extend to all Places where the same God was worshipped in the like Purity, Simplicity and Truth. They went indeed farther than *Joab* here did, because he had no occasion to go farther; but his Principles would have carried him to the Defence of the Cities of God, if they had been either in *Ammon's* or in *Syria's* Territories; and we need not question, but he would have made the Rescue and Deliverance of their persecuted Brethren, a quickning Motive and Encouragement to the behaving themselves valiantly, and quitting themselves like Men.

The last Thing we have to consider in *Joab's* Conduct, is, his Resignation and Submission of the Issue and Event to God's good Pleasure and Disposal; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good. He had made what Preparations he could, or thought convenient to his Purpose; he had gathered a great Army, and selected all or most of the chosen Men to oppose to the *Syrians*, and committed the rest to *Abishai's* Management, to order as he saw Necessity against the *Ammonites*; and had agreed to do what was fit in case of each other's Exigence, and he had made his final Speech to all of them; and done, in a word, all that a wise and valiant General had to do, and then commits the Event to God. It is in vain to think of doing any thing well without God; but it is as vain to think that God will do any thing without us, that lies in our Power to do. God is, in all our Wants, our Help and Succour; but not unless we will co-operate with him, and join our Forces to those which he affords us: He is indeed the

the best Ally that can be; but he will never fight our Battels by himself, whilst we stand idle by, and unconcern'd: He is indeed the Author and Bestower of every good and perfect Gift; but he bestows them all upon our Industry and Vigilance; he makes his Blessings still the Recompences of our Care and Labour; he gives Success, and Wealth, and Honour, and Wisdom; but he gives them to us by our selves, and gives them to our Diligence and Industry, to Labour and much Study; he gives us Virtues, but it is by Pains and Habits; he gives us many Graces, but it is by frequent Exercises and good Uses of them; it is in vain to ask him any thing we can bestow upon our selves; for that's the way he has already taken to bestow it on us; it is but mocking God, to beg of him what we think not worth our while or labour to obtain.

By Vigilance, Activity, and looking wisely Salust.

after Things, they all go well; but when

you give your self to Sloth, and Laziness, and Cowardice, you shall in vain implore the Assistance of the Gods; for they are angry and incens'd with such, said a Heathen of old, of his fictitious Deities; and we may say as much of ours, the true and only everlasting God: For altho' we are commanded to pray to God for our daily Bread, yet we must work for it, if we will have it; and St. Paul concludes we shall make our selves unworthy of it, if we will not. We must indeed cast all our Care on God, and trust to his good Providence, and be over-anxious for nothing at all; but we must not so trust him, as to tempt him, by neglecting the Means which he hath put within our Power; we must do what we can for our selves in every Case, and pray to God to bless and prosper our Endeavours, to make those Means effectual to the attaining of their End, and to supply, by his abundant Goodness, what is want-
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ing: And when we have done all we can, all that is fit for us to do, we must resign up all to God, and try to be contented with the Issue he shall give to our Attempts, let it be what it will; and say with *Joab*, *The Lord do that which seemeth him good*. By this we acknowledge both his Being and his Providence; by this we own him for the supreme Governor and Arbiter of all Affairs; that he both overlooks and over-rules them all; that we put no Trust or Confidence in our Strength or Skill alone, without his Blessing; that all our Cunning and Abilities are but his Instruments, and the means by which he brings to pass his glorious Purposes; that the Preparations we make, are neither made in Ostentation of our Strength and Excellence, nor in Doubt or Distrust of his Almighty Power, nor in Defiance of it, to be sure; but that we do therein, as reasonable Creatures ought to do, make such Provision, as that Reason says we should, and such as is proportion'd out to our Abilities and our Necessities; but know withal, that they will signify nothing without his Pleasure and Permission; that all our Expectations and Desires are, That these our reasonable and natural Means may attain the End for which they are provided; but still with this Supposal, that it is agreeable to him; still it must be, *As it seemeth good to him*. But this is not all; we do not only by this Resignation and Submission own him for the Master and Disposer of all Events, but we prepare our selves thereby against them; let the Issue be what it will, we are thereby fitted for it: If it be prosperous, and as we wish it, we know it is, nevertheless, an Effect of God's Kindness towards us, altho' we were our selves the Instruments of working it; and we have then this Satisfaction, that God co-operates with our Designs, and blesses our Endeavours; they who have perfect Confidence in God's Good-

Goodness, and are perfectly resign'd themselves to his Disposal, have every Blessing doubled that befalls them; they have all the Happiness that the Blessing of itself can naturally afford, to be sure; but then the Thoughts of having it from God, of considering it as an Effect of his peculiar Favour and Benignity, that it is the Disposal of unerring Wisdom; these Thoughts advance the Blessing to a mighty Height, and make it dear and valuable indeed: If it be cross, and other than we wish'd and hop'd for, yet this Resignation to the Will of God, makes it go down a great deal better; it puts us upon thinking it was neither necessary nor convenient for us, since it was denied by him, who gives to those who trust, entirely to him, not only more, but better Things than they can ask or think themselves; or else it drives us to consider with our selves what we have done that call'd for and deserv'd such Punishment, and consequently gains the End of every one of God's Inflictions, namely, Self-examination and Amendment; it never drives us from, but towards God; and makes us see his Mercy in his Justice, his Goodness in our Punishments. But (abstracting the Consideration of our Sins being the Cause of our Miscarriages, as they are not always so) when we know we have done all that we should and could do; and after that, have given up the Event to God, let it be what it will; we have this Satisfaction, That neither our own Hearts, nor other People, can reproach us justly with Neglect or Cowardice. When we have done our utmost, and perform'd what lay in *us*, the Disappointment leaves no Sting or Torment in the Mind; 'tis not vexatious to reflect on our Miscarriages, that hapned thro' no Fault of ours, but were invisible, and not to be prevented; the Trouble is, where we look back, and see our Folly, or our Wickedness, the Causes of our Sufferings:
That

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That Recollection is uneasy, and intolerable, and fills the Soul with Pain, and with Confusion; but when we have discharg'd our Duties, *been of good Courage, and behaved our selves as Men*; then we can say before, with Cheartfulness, *The Lord do that which seemeth him good*; and bear it handsomely after, be it what it will. We may be then unfortunate; but still we shall be innocent, and neither be accused nor condemned by our own selves, or others: We acted prudently and well, but were not Masters of the Event; that was in God's Hands, and *he hath done that which seemed him good.*

The Application I intend to make of all these Matters to our selves, will be both short and plain. We are, we know, involv'd in War alike with all the World; and tho' the Occasion of it is not the same with that of *David's*, yet it is full as great and necessary: The *Hanun* that we have to deal withal, does not descend to treat *Ambassadors* villainously, but their *Masters*; deals with them all as Vassals, or as Children; does not cut off their Garments to the middle, but divests them of the whole, with mighty Scorn and Insolence; and cuts not off their Beards, but pares them to the Quick; is not at War with all his Neighbours only, but with Faith and Honour, Truth and Justice, and Religion; who knows no Distinction betwixt Right and Wrong, but makes his Pleasure and Convenience the Standard of his private and his publick Actions: That has enraged the whole World against him, and, like a ravenous Wolf call'd all the Neighbourhood out to hunt their common Enemy; that notwithstanding all his open Force and Strength, and all his secret Charms, hath kept no active Ally or Confederate with him, but the publick and professed Enemy of Christianity; and that too by such Arts and Methods,

thods, as both good *Christians* and good *Turks* abominate: One that besides these Publick Evils, hath, by the Vices and Impurities of his private Life, sinn'd himself into a dreadful Fear and Superstition; and has been labouring for some Years to appease and placate God by human Sacrifices, by Cruelty and great Barbarity, by the Destruction of his own Subjects, and by exhorting and assisting other Princes to do the like. One, in a word, that has almost all the evil Qualities of all the ancient and renowned Sons of Violence, without the Shadow of their Virtues, or Pretence to any of their Merits: This is the Enemy I would exhort you to be of good Courage against; and say with *Joab*, *Let us play the Men*. For tho' these Words were spoken to an Army, ready to engage in Fight, yet they are full as fit and proper for a peaceful Auditory; for *we*, as well as Soldiers, are concern'd in all the Events of War: *We* are the Body, of which *They* are the Hands to defend us; and if *we* do not quit our selves like Men, 'twill be to little Purpose what *they* do: If *we* by our Despondency or Fear, by our Divisions and undue Heats, by our Remissness or Neglect of publick Concerns, by our Rapaciousness or Parsimony, where there is no need, or any other Methods, starve or discourage *them abroad*, we shall in vain think to be safe our selves *at home*; for whatever be the Event, *We* shall be sure to feel the worst Effects of it. Here *are the People and the Cities of our God*; Here are the Lives we have to lose our selves, and those we value equally with our own; Here are the Laws and Government so famous over all the World, for *Liberty* without *Licentiousness*, for *Monarchy* without *Tyranny*, and for *Subjection* without *Slavery*; Here are the Fortunes and Estates the best secur'd that
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can be, not subject to the Assessment or Taxation of an arbitrary, lawless Prince alone, whose Vanity or Folly, bad Designs or Wantonness, might drain the labouring and industrious Subjects; nor yet so much the private Master's own, as that he should deny the Use of what the Publick finds is necessary to discharge its Duty. Here, lastly, are *the Cities of our God*, the best Religion in the World, founded and built upon the Laws of God, and established by those of the Land: And if all these Considerations are not strong enough to perswade us *to be of good Courage, and play the Men* in their behalf, there is nothing left to do it, we shall deserve to lose them all. The very Apprehension of the Loss of any *one* of these, tho' sometimes in Imagination only, and oftentimes at great Distance, has frequently alarm'd us to great Care and Watchfulness, and rais'd our Hearts and Resolutions; and if *all* of them together, in most apparent Hazard, by a strong and subtle Enemy, will not encourage us; nay, force us to a brave Defence, and quitting of our selves *like Men*, we shall be miserable to Extremity; but shall be miserable without Excuse or Pity. When Men's Misfortunes come apparently from God's Hand, from some unlucky Accidents, that neither all their Wisdom could foresee, nor all their Power and Care prevent; then, as I said, they become the Objects of Compassion: But when their Folly or their Carelessness, their Cowardice or Falshood, are the Occasions of their Sufferings, the World around must laugh at and despise them, and their own Hearts reproach and condemn them: If after we have gone thus far, and made such fair and towardly Advances to a thorough Deliverance

verance of our selves from many *certain*, and more *threatned* Evils; and of the rest of *Europe*, from the Chains provided for them, we should not now go on, behave our selves like Men, and second with our Hearts, and Hands, and all the Assistance that we can, the great and generous Purposes of our *King* abroad; if we should either by Dissensions, or ill-tim'd Frugality, weaken his Hands and Heart, or those of his Allies; we should deservedly become the Hissing and the Scorn of all the Earth; our Chains would then become our Necks, and Slavery fit gracefully upon us, because we took such Pains for, and because we did so well deserve it: And where should we look for Pity and Compassion then, when our own Hearts would load us with Reproach and Infamy, and great Confusion? But far be such Suspicion from us; far be the Qmen of these Miseries; we have a much more lightsome, comfortable Prospect of Affairs; the Cause is just and honourable, so is the End, and so are the Means; it is not *Joab* now, but *David*, that exhorts *to be of good Courage, to play the Men*; not thoughtless Fools, or trifling Children, but *the Men, for our People, and for the Cities of our God*. And let us therefore hearken to him; let us both animate our selves and others with the Consideration, that all we have that is near and dear to us, is at Stake, and that we owe our best Endeavours to them; and when we have done all that lies within our Power, let us with *Joab* say, *The Lord do that which seemeth him good*; for then it will be Time, and not before: Then let the Event be what it will, we shall be satisfi'd; then we can answer it to our selves and all Posterity, altho' we are in Chains and Bondage; we did what we could and should; we took the
Courses

Courses that we judg'd most reasonable and fit ; we were not wanting to our selves ; but God is above us all, and knows what we deserve, and what is most convenient for us ; he is the Arbiter and wise Disposer of our Persons and Affairs ; he is the Master of Events, and gives us out the Lots that best besit our Circumstances ; and we must be contented with them, be they what they will ; and say with *Joab* here, and good old *Eli* in another Place, *1 Sam. iii. 18. It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.*

F I N I S.



